

ODYSSEUS AND THE SWINE

and other Stories

LION FEUCHTWANGER

has also written

JEW SÜSS

PARIS GAZETTE

THE OPPERMANNS

SUCCESS

THE PRETENDER

THE JEW OF ROME

JOSEPHUS

THE UGLY DUCHESS

POWER

THREE PLAYS

TWO ANGLO-SAXON PLAYS

PEP

THE DEVIL IN FRANCE

THE LAUTENSACK BROTHERS

SIMONE

PROUD DESTINY

ODYSSEUS AND THE SWINE

and other Stories

by

LION FEUCHTWANGER

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NOTE

These stories are few in number, various in form and content. But all are animated by a common purpose: to seize on that particular aspect of a subject—be it a personality or the tendency of a period—which permits of an overall survey; to observe it at the moment which the great German critic Lessing terms the instant of fruition.

They are, therefore, not short stories in the Anglo-Saxon sense, for none aims primarily at relating an anecdote, which is the chief function of the Anglo-Saxon short story, according to Henry James, eminent American author of Continental short stories.

L. F.

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THE HOUSE IN SHADY LANE

AMONG the many strange customs we Jews have, the following impressed me most when I first understood it. At Passover, we drink wine in celebration of our deliverance from Egyptian slavery. But before we drain the goblet, we take from it ten drops, in memory of the plagues with which the Egyptians were smitten. The thought of the sufferings of our enemy reduces the pleasure of our goblet. By ten drops.

This custom taught me, even as a boy, to remember that my enemies were human too, and not to rejoice blindly over their defeat or downfall.

On one occasion, however, I have rejoiced wildly over the downfall of one I hated, and have refused to renounce even a single drop of that joy. This was when I learned that State Councillor Dierkopf had been killed by a bomb.

I first met Franz Dierkopf at the house of Professor Rapp at the Rhineland university town of Battenberg. I was preparing a novel called *Josephus* at the time, and was engaged in research on the origins of Christianity. I looked up Professor Rapp because he had published a number of papers on that subject, treatises that were of particular interest to me.

Professor Carl Friedrich Rapp was a man of about sixty-five. He was of very small stature, with an unusually large mouth in a deeply lined face. His hair was cut rather long and was white as snow, but his clever, grimly sarcastic eyes, under a broad forehead, looked young, bright, and piercing.

Professor Rapp had dedicated his life to the task of sifting the historical facts from the traditions about Jesus Christ. He had collected an immense amount of material on the subject. He was, in fact, more at home in Jerusalem of

the first century after Christ than in the city of Battenberg, and more familiar with the mountain villages of Galilee of that period than with the settlements in the Black Forest. He had come to new and exciting conclusions. The bellicose manner, however, in which he asserted his views had made him many enemies. He was forced to give up his seat at the university, and had remained practically unknown to the general public.

He did not conceal his pleasure at the deep interest I took in his work. He showed me his books and manuscripts with fond pride, and indeed there were treasures among them for which he was justly envied by every connoisseur.

Then, at the dinner table, I met his wife and daughter. Mrs. Pauline Rapp was a charming lady, cultured and well bred, but not much interested in practical, everyday things. Their daughter Hedwig was pretty in a quiet way, and her deep, intelligent eyes made her more than just attractive.

I stayed in Battenberg longer than I had originally intended. I liked the House in the Shady Lane. It was situated just outside the town, between the mountains and the forest, in gay and yet serene surroundings. It was old; the whims and tastes of generations had built it. It was frilly, full of nooks and corners, corridors and staircases. The Professor had furnished it with loving care to match his personality. There was, for instance, his huge writing desk which had come from the refectory of the monastery of Benediktbeuren. It was always covered with a mass of papers in well-planned disorder, and commanded a view of the quiet and manifold charms of the landscape. And there, reposing in their drawers and on their shelves, were the manuscripts and books. There was also an antique piece of statuary, a woman's head of more than life size, a sibyl, as the Professor explained to me. Mysteriously she gazed into space. "Don't you think," the Professor suggested, "that, when possessed by the Deity, she would 'speak with raving lips, truths unadorned and unanointed, things beyond laughter'?"

A wall-enclosed, hilly garden surrounded the house. It,

too, was odd and frilly. There was an Alpine rock garden; there were walls colourfully overgrown in the Italian manner; an English lawn, and German groves of trees. The Professor was especially proud of his maple trees. The whole estate was like its owner—old, with an air of introspection and yet brimming with life.

Embittered as he was by his unfortunate experiences with his colleagues, Professor Rapp showed me an affection that seemed to increase daily. It must have been because I accepted his theories without professional jealousy, with objective appreciation. It wasn't long before he shared his great secret with me.

It was this: There exists no testimony, by a pagan writer of the first century of the Christian era, for the life and work of Christ. Well, as Professor Rapp explained to me triumphantly, he had found, in a scholium, a quotation from the stemmata of a certain Symmachos of Miletus which contained an unequivocal reference to the existence of a man whose characteristics were more like those of Jesus of the Gospel than those of any other historically attested figure of that time. At first the passage seemed obscure and Professor Rapp's explanation far-fetched; but his interpretation was none the less conclusive. No matter how thoroughly his proofs and conclusions might be checked and re-checked, by philology or exact history or whatever science, they would stand their ground. If there was a passage in the works of a pagan writer of the first century which might be regarded as testimony for the existence of Christ, it was this passage discovered by Professor Rapp.

The Professor was planning to announce his great discovery to the world for the first time in his *Life of Christ*, a book he had been working on for years. Until the time of its publication, however, the passage from Symmachos was to be kept a strict secret. He did not show 'the passage' even to me. "It's not that I distrust you, my friend," he explained to me with a charmingly naïve and yet sly smile, "but you will understand that one guards such a treasure

even from one's wife and child. A hint dropped by accident, and some nosy and jealous old bookworm appropriates the passage, 'adapts' it, and its whole flavour is ruined." For this reason, Professor Rapp had acquired the manuscript of that scholium, and it reposed, together with his interpretation of it, in a safe deposit box. "Here is the key," he said with almost grim cunning, and eyed it with boyish pride. "But where the box is which this key opens, no one knows except me and my wife."

Well, it was at the house of Professor Rapp where I met this fellow Franz Dierkopf, of whom I spoke at the beginning of this report. When I first saw him, he was close to thirty, tall and lanky, with sandy hair, very light skin and pale, quick eyes. He was an instructor at the University of Battenberg, and worked in the same field as Rapp. In fact he was the Professor's favourite pupil. He was completely at home in the House in the Shady Lane, and was extremely well liked by its occupants. His relationship to Hedwig, however, seemed somewhat peculiar. She would often tease him mercilessly, with allusions that remained obscure to a third person. He would always reply politely, but his politeness appeared forced sometimes. When he believed himself unobserved, an angry light would come into his pale eyes. On the other hand, when he turned to others, Hedwig would look at him with urgent appeal in her eyes and, as it seemed to me, with sadness and even pain.

Without being able to account for it satisfactorily, I took an instant dislike to Dr. Dierkopf. All the praise heaped upon his head by the entire Rapp family could not overcome the slight distaste with which his restless eyes and his over-zealous amiability filled me.

Franz Dierkopf had been, as I learned later, closely connected with the House in the Shady Lane since the day of his birth. His parents had occupied the porter's lodge; his father had been the gardener and the Professor's valet, while his mother did the housework. She would bring little Franz along with her when she did her chores. Professor Rapp took a liking to the bright little fellow who showed intense

interest in the many books from the very start. The Professor told me how the huge, pigskin-bound volume of Philo had once almost crushed little Franz. Later, Professor Rapp very generously made it possible for the talented youth to study at the University, and thus gave him the foundation for a promising career.

I would meet the young instructor quite frequently, and not only at the House in the Shady Lane. On one occasion, he sat with some friends not far from my table at the Rathskeller. His party consisted of a bull-necked man, a woman, and a girl. They had obviously eaten heartily and drunk much, and they were quite noisy. The girl, young, plump, pretty, heavily made up, and with a rather vacant face, sat there, languid and relaxed, and looked at Dierkopf as if she owned him.

When his friends had left, Dierkopf came over to my table. Presumably to dispel the unfavourable impression I might have received, he acted particularly frank and sincere, and talked to me as if to an old and trusted friend. Herr Scheffler, in whose company I had seen him, had been a crony of his father's, he explained to me almost apologetically. Franz Dierkopf hadn't had a great deal to drink, but he could not hold much and must have therefore talked more than he meant to. He went into great detail about the House in the Shady Lane. Half ironically, half seriously he told of how objects there had turned into living things for him. His description was so vivid that I could almost see it happen.

As a little boy, he would make trips around that huge writing desk, real journeys of exploration. Once in a while, secretly, he would even climb up on the top of it. There he would crouch among the papers and the books: he was on board the ship his father had told him about; he was crossing the storming seas. It was all fraught with great danger, but breathtakingly exciting. He had stood in front of the sibyl, his heart pounding, and had waited for her to open her eyes. The great folio of Philo was an evil and dangerous beast, and he teased it. At first it had kept still, but then it

had nearly crushed him. He had been at the house innumerable times, but every time, he told me confidentially, he had entered it as if it were a new world, full of temptation and full of menace. He would often feel as if he were in church, and even now he sometimes felt there like a schoolboy during an examination. He was full of respect, desire, affection, fear, envy. He was bound to that house for ever.

When it came out that I knew about the Professor's great discovery, he first seemed disconcerted. But then he grew even more confidential. He plunged into almost rapturous speculations about the importance of the find. What a glorious sense of achievement it must give the Professor! For eighteen hundred years the Christian Churches of all denominations had been searching, with infinite care and diligence, for just such a passage. Still, he added with a touch of bitterness, to make such a discovery one had to have not only merit, but also luck. A great many conditions had to be fulfilled; one had to have time and money to make extended trips in order to pursue a vague idea of this sort. One had to be in the position to play the patron of arts and letters, to be a collector of means in order to get action out of librarians, the men in charge of archives.

Then, smilingly, he spoke, as if of a charming little weakness, of the jealous distrust with which the Professor guarded his find. Rapp had of course kept the passage from Symmachos a secret from him, too. That was too bad, Dierkopf thought. For no matter how the passage read, it was of the greatest importance just how it was interpreted when first published. This was the first time that the conception of Christ would be based upon reliable historical material. Wouldn't it be wise for the Professor to let me, or him, or both of us collaborate with him? It could certainly do no harm if he took advantage of the imagination of us younger men, too.

But the Professor remained firm. Even when, two months later, Hedwig Rapp and Franz Dierkopf became engaged, he declared with grim satisfaction that he trusted

Franz with his daughter, but not with the passage from Symmachos.

Before Dierkopf and Hedwig were married, Hitler came to power. Germany shrouded herself in darkness, the arts and sciences came to a standstill, and the majority of the artists and scientists of renown left the country.

Professor Carl Friedrich Rapp remained, although he was known to hold liberal views and was therefore exposed to danger. He obviously did not want to interrupt his great work that was nearing completion, and he needed his books which he would certainly not have been allowed to take out of the country.

Some time afterwards I read in the newspapers that he had died. What had happened in the House in the Shady Lane, I learned from his widow and daughter whom I saw later in London.

Franz Dierkopf had taken very active part in the discussions whether they ought to leave Germany or not. He agreed with the Professor that he ought not to abandon his work. And as the Professor stayed, he naturally stayed too. Incidentally, Franz Dierkopf had in no way compromised himself politically. But it became evident that he could not marry the daughter of a professor with distinctly liberal views without jeopardizing his career. It was therefore agreed upon at the House in the Shady Lane that the wedding should be postponed until Hitler's downfall, which could not be very far off.

But Hitler's power only strengthened. Professor Rapp suffered from conditions in the Reich, and made but slow progress with his work. Moreover, it became increasingly apparent that he was writing for the shelf only, as his findings were in contradiction to the tenets of the 'German Christian Movement' founded by the National Socialists. It appeared certain that the authorities would never permit the Professor's book to be published.

At that point Dierkopf suggested that Professor Rapp make him his collaborator, and give him access to his

material. He, Dierkopf, had great confidence in his skill; he was sure he could express the important points in such a manner that the authorities would not take offence. Although he would of course properly emphasize the fact that the Professor deserved all the credit for the discovery, the book naturally would have to go out under his, Dierkopf's, name. The old gentleman did not comprehend for quite a while what it was all about. When he finally understood, he turned furiously on Dierkopf. "Scoundrel," he shouted, and would not let him set foot in the house again.

Dierkopf, however, refused to give up. He turned to Hedwig for help. He explained to her that if the Professor remained stubborn, he would probably not live to see his material published at all; in fact, there was danger that it would be lost for ever. Franz kept after her, Hedwig related, and he acted so concerned and so sympathetic that she would at times almost believe in the sincerity of his arguments, although, deep down, she knew that he was a scoundrel.

I could picture Dierkopf as he talked to the girl. There he stood, tall, supple, nice to look at, with his pale eyes gazing deep into hers. With his cajoling voice, he spoke to her, his words a blend of false reasoning and tenderness.

Up to that time, he had carefully avoided defining his attitude toward the Third Reich, and the 'Christian Movement' founded by it. By then, however, the new masters felt strong enough to demand an unequivocal yes or no from everyone. Attacks against Dierkopf appeared in print. Unless he wanted to lose his job, he had to take a definite stand. He had his choice between betraying his scientific integrity or of leaving the Reich. It must have been a difficult decision to make.

He stayed. He made his peace with the Third Reich. He did not say yes in a loud and ringing voice—that was not in his character—but he did say yes. In the article in *The Monthly Magazine of Bible Criticism* he maintained, just as before, theories from the school of Professor Rapp, but he interpreted them in a way more pleasing to the new

rulers. In a second article, he proceeded to twist those theories around, and in a third article they turned out to mean exactly the opposite of Professor Rapp's teachings. In this last article the Christ of the Passion had been replaced by the Christ created by the Germans, the Gothic 'Krist of the Sword.'

A short time after the publication of this last article, Professor Rapp died.

Franz Dierkopf came to the House in the Shady Lane. He was grief-stricken. He offered to assist the ladies in every way he could. He attended the funeral. He insisted on making a speech at the grave. He wrote obituaries—'high-sounding, meaningless obituaries,' Hedwig explained.

Very soon it became apparent what he was after. He offered to edit and publish the Professor's literary legacy. He hinted that the authorities might force the ladies to deliver the material to them under the pretext that, according to the principles of the Third Reich, science is public property, and public interest comes before individual interest.

Dierkopf tried very hard to convince the two women, but he had to realize that they would remain firm. He stopped his visits to the House in the Shady Lane.

He married Tilde Scheffler, the daughter of the Gauleiter, of that bull-necked man with whom I had seen him at the Rathskeller. He got Professor Rapp's chair at the university, and the title of 'State Councillor.'

The settling of Professor Rapp's estate proved difficult. His widow and daughter were summoned to the police. The late Professor's writings, they claimed, were now being used more and more by rebellious religious groups for purposes inimical to the State. There was cause to suspect that his posthumous papers, too, might be used for such purposes.

The two ladies were put under surveillance. Their friends and acquaintances became frightened and began to avoid them.

Once the police summoned Hedwig only. From that trip she didn't return to the House in the Shady Lane. Mrs. Rapp ran from one office to the other, cooled her heels in the waiting rooms of government and party authorities. Nobody knew anything, nobody could or would give her any information.

Finally, in despair, she went to Dierkopf.

He pretended to be painfully surprised. "Why didn't you come to me right away?" he asked with kind reproach. He acted extremely concerned, and promised to do everything in his power.

The next day he telephoned that he had found out where Hedwig was. He didn't think they would treat her too badly because he and his father-in-law had already interceded for her. However, he had so far been unable to find out why she had been arrested.

The day after that, he came to the House in the Shady Lane. He told Mrs. Rapp that the authorities had somehow got wind of the material the Professor had hidden. Either Mrs. Rapp had dropped a careless hint about 'the passage,' or perhaps a third person, someone they didn't even know, to whom the Professor might have mentioned it. He, Dierkopf, of course knew that the papers the Professor had left behind were purely scientific documents out of which no political capital could possibly be made. But how can one explain such a thing to a policeman? In short, there was probably no other way of convincing the authorities of the political harmlessness of the material than to hand it over to them.

Mrs. Rapp was desperate. Dierkopf begged, entreated her to let him have the contents of that safe deposit box. He had loved Hedwig, he declared; he loved her still. He could not bear the thought of her being in a concentration camp, and he failed to understand how Mrs. Rapp could hesitate even for one moment. But she refused. "For three days, I kept refusing," she told me, "and for three nights, I never closed an eye." But finally she gave in and told Dierkopf where the box was—at the Deutsche Bank in

Stuttgart. They took a train there, Mrs. Rapp and Dierkopf, and opened the box.

It was empty.

Dierkopf, usually such a perfect gentleman, lost his temper. "You've lied to me," he shouted at Mrs. Rapp. "You've removed the manuscript. But they'll catch up with you yet." Mrs. Rapp, however, was no less amazed than he was. In fact she was crushed. For what was to become of Hedwig now that the manuscript was not there?

Realizing that Mrs. Rapp was just as painfully surprised as he was, Dierkopf pulled himself together and apologized. They took the train back to Battenberg. It was a quiet trip; they hardly spoke. "Where could he have hidden the manuscript?" Dierkopf kept asking. "I don't know," Mrs. Rapp would reply.

"I really don't, even now," she told me. "I couldn't understand why Carl Friedrich should have done this to me."

I remembered the sly smile with which the Professor had shown me the key to the safe deposit box, and I could guess why he had kept his treasure a secret even from his wife. Undoubtedly he was afraid that, guileless and unsuspecting as she was, she might unknowingly betray it. He did not want to give her the opportunity to do so.

Franz Dierkopf must have come to the same conclusion. In any case, Mrs. Rapp related, he became his old self again toward the end of the journey. He apologized once more explaining that he had lost his self-control only because of his love for Hedwig, and because he felt that freeing her had now become immeasurably more difficult. After thinking it over, however, things did not seem quite so black any more. Anyway, he would do all he possibly could to get her out.

It was obviously during this trip that he made his plan as to how to proceed further. The two women could no longer be of any help to him. They really did not know anything; they were only in his way. They had to go away. He had to have the house to himself. He suspected that the

manuscript was in the house. Surely the Professor had hidden it there, in one of the innumerable nooks and crannies—or he had buried it in the garden.

So Hedwig was soon set free. A few days afterwards, however, the two ladies were again summoned to the police. They were politely told that they were not very popular in town, and that it was feared they might be molested. In order to spare them the discomfort of further protective custody, they were advised to leave the country. They could count on every possible assistance from the authorities; in fact their exit permits had already been granted. Naturally they would have to leave the House in the Shady Lane behind, complete with furnishings and books, with everything as it was, for purposes of a thorough investigation. But they would be allowed to take some of their money and part of their valuables along. They were even given a certain amount of grace: ten days.

"Two days before we left," Hedwig related, "Franz came to see us, accompanied by an official. He apologized for disturbing us, and explained that he had been requested to make sure that everything had been left in its proper place, and that nothing had been removed. He had considered it best to comply with this request, for undoubtedly a search conducted by him would prove less embarrassing than one by a callous and possibly even rude official. He himself had, of course, not the slightest suspicion that anything had been changed or removed from the house or its surroundings. It was simply a routine search.

"The routine search lasted four hours. Franz came at twelve past ten," Hedwig told me, "and left at two minutes to two. I looked at my watch. We picture the Devil with horns and cloven hoofs"; Hedwig mused, "I think that a good modern painter ought to portray the Devil, the Evil Incarnate, exactly the way Franz looked that day. He was charming and polite, but not to my dying day shall I forget those eyes with which he looked at everything—those darting, searching, distrustful, horribly greedy eyes with which he made sure that everything was in its accustomed

place, all the pieces of furniture, objects of art, manuscripts, books. Again and again his glance would quickly and surreptitiously dart over to us, and then back once more to the furnishings, the walls, the books, as if to find out whether we knew the secret after all. And the most contemptible thing of all was that, during all this, he kept on talking.

"He feigned sympathy, and behind that mask of sympathy there was his secret triumph that now he would occupy this house, and in the end find the manuscript with 'the passage.' All this was not discernible on the surface, but it was there all the time, his barely suppressed, dirty, triumphant malice. It spread throughout the house like bad perfume. And he kept on talking, and comforting us: 'These embarrassing formalities will be over soon now. And please let me reassure you that nothing will get into the wrong hands, that everything will be guarded faithfully and given such expert care that not even the Professor could have done better. If eventually, as is entirely possible, the manuscript turns up, then you may return to find everything in the best of order. We are taking the house over merely 'in trust,' so to speak.'

"You know his voice, you know his perfect manners; he was always a model pupil, always got an 'A' in conduct. Incidentally, Mother took it wonderfully well; she obediently went along with them through all the rooms of the house, for four whole hours. Exhausting as it was, she never sat down even for a moment, and answered all their questions promptly and to the point."

What courage Hedwig must have shown to bear up under those four hours without an outbreak, and to listen to the polished malice of the man who had been her fiancé.

She ended her report. "Now he's got the house," she said, "and we're sitting here."

Some time after I had talked to Hedwig and her mother, old man Spengel, a Swiss librarian, came to me. He was a very competent man; Professor Rapp had employed him

often. Now it was State Councillor Dierkopf who frequently availed himself of his services.

Librarian Spengel came to me upon request of State Councillor Dierkopf. Yes, Franz Dierkopf had the nerve to send me a letter asking for a favour. After lengthy investigations, he had found out where Professor Rapp had originally discovered that scholium. The men through whose hands the manuscript had passed at the time had either overlooked 'the passage,' or they had not recognized its significance. They might, however, be able to give, from memory, some information about one point or another which would keep Dierkopf looking in the right direction. In beautiful, urgent prose, Dierkopf implored me not to let the Professor's lifework go to waste. For its sake, he begged me to give every possible assistance to Librarian Spengel. It was a question of enriching the fund of human knowledge, of devotion to an ideal which, after all, we both served, although in different camps.

Librarian Spengel told me of the tireless efforts which State Councillor Dierkopf had made in order to bring the lost manuscript to light again. The police had made inquiries at all banks in the Reich to find out if Professor Rapp had perhaps rented a safe deposit box at one of them. But in vain. State Councillor Dierkopf was, as before, of the opinion that the manuscript could be found in the House in the Shady Lane. He was firmly convinced of it, in fact almost possessed by the idea.

"Isn't it strange," Librarian Spengel ventured, "that a man of Dierkopf's calibre and reputation should bury himself in Battenberg? He could have had a professorship in Berlin, of course—he could have had anything he wanted. But his sense of duty to his chosen field has kept him in Battenberg, at the House in the Shady Lane. He had the entire house, all of its walls, nooks, and corners, tapped and examined by experts, and the whole huge garden dug up. The gardener even told me that the State Councillor himself often gets up at night, as if driven by his idea. He takes a spade in his own hands, and shovels and digs."

Spengel, noticing how greatly his report interested me, kept on talking. People close to the State Councillor, he told me confidentially, speak of his efforts to unearth the manuscript as of a mania, a fixed idea. Gauleiter Scheffler took it very amiss that his son-in-law had declined the call to Berlin because of such 'stuff and nonsense.' Professor Dierkopf's wife, the daughter of the Gauleiter, couldn't stand it in the House in the Shady Lane any longer. She is a gay and sociable lady, and was highly indignant that her husband wouldn't go to Berlin, but stayed on in the cheerless House in the Shady Lane instead, merely to pursue that crazy obsession of his. She spends most of her time away from her husband, and there is talk that she intends to divorce him. "Such are the sacrifices the Professor is making for the sake of science," Librarian Spengel said in sincere praise of the man who had sent him to me.

This report filled me with malicious joy. There, in the House in the Shady Lane, sat Franz Dierkopf as master and conqueror. He had driven out the Professor and his family, but he wasn't getting any happiness out of it.

This was what I had wished, what I had hoped, what I had expected. Professor Rapp had called Dierkopf a scoundrel, but Franz Dierkopf was not simply a scoundrel, not merely a careerist. I had had a good look at him, had scrutinized him with the penetrating eye of ill-will, and I knew that it wasn't ambition, pure and simple, that made him look so avidly for that manuscript with the testimony of Symmachos of Miletus. Franz Dierkopf was a scientist; he had intuition and imagination.

All his life, Franz Dierkopf had studied the precepts of the first Jewish-Christian catechism, the parables of the Old and the New Testaments, the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, the figures of the traitors and false prophets as legend had formed them from Balaam to Judas. A man like that must be imbued with such knowledge and such concepts. It was not possible that he could shed them overnight. He may fight them with trained, judicial intelligence,

with theories of the Master Race; he may be calling those Jewish-Christian concepts ridiculous weaknesses, atavistic dreams, relics of an era of superstition—but he was still, I know with mathematical certainty, permeated with the teachings of the Bible. He could not rid himself of his 'atavistic inhibitions' or of his 'outdated conscience,' or whatever he might call it.

I recalled our meeting at the Rathskeller when he told me how, ever since the awakening of his consciousness, the House in the Shady Lane had attracted and yet oppressed him. He had told so vividly how the objects there had turned into living things for him. I could well imagine how hard he was fighting those boyish dreams now, fighting them with all the newly acquired weapons of his cynical rationalism, and how he failed to conquer them. The eerie life of their own which the objects in the House in the Shady Lane had assumed for the boy only became weirder and more bizarre. He was sitting at the desk, the mighty desk from the refectory of the monastery, working; and his task was beyond his strength. The desk loomed gigantic, menacing; and the shadows in the maze of corridors frightened him. The sibyl became possessed by the Deity, and she spoke to him, 'with raving lips, truths unadorned and unanointed, things beyond laughter.' The books he read were full of annotations by the dead Professor.

Franz Dierkopf could not help seeing the hand that wrote those words—those small and graceful Greek letters, and those big, massive Hebrew ones. And Franz Dierkopf could hardly find peace and contentment when he sat in the garden, on the stone bench, on the comfortable pillows that had been there since the Professor's time, and looked up into the branches of the great maple tree, the favourite of the Professor.

The house is dangerous. He knows very well that the house will drive him mad. But the house won't let him go. I know it. He descends into the garden by night. He digs and searches, and searches and digs. He toils in vain, this ludicrous treasure hunter, for he will find nothing but

earthworms. I know my friend the Professor. He was a thorough man. He made sure of everything. He hid his Symmachos so well that no Dierkopf is going to find it. That cautious old man had told Dierkopf, with sly and malicious cunning, just enough so he would know for certain that the testimony existed, but could not go on alone. And even if he were to dig up the whole of the Black Forest, and if he employed ten librarians to search all the museums in the whole world, he would not find anything. The Professor will never deliver the testimony to one who has abused, and would abuse, the Word.

In the third year of the War, I chanced to run into Librarian Spengel again. He told me to what end State Councillor Dierkopf had come.

His mania for digging had grown progressively worse, and it was this mania that finally destroyed him.

A lone bomb, dropped over Battenberg one night, had killed him. It seems reasonable to assume that it was the last bomb of a flyer who, returning from a fulfilled mission, was attracted by the light of Dierkopf digging in his garden.

I confess that, when I heard this, I drained and relished the cup of my joy to the very dregs, refusing to give up one single drop.

A short time ago, by the way, I met Hedwig again. She was filled with grim satisfaction that Franz Dierkopf was no longer in this world. "But the manuscript is in the world," she said triumphantly, "I know where it is." And as I looked up at her in surprise, she added: "The box with the manuscript is well hidden, deep, in the soil of a wheat-field."

Her beautiful, intelligent eyes looked at me, and I saw clearly what she saw: wheat in the wind, and below, deep and secure in the good earth, the box with the manuscript.

And I know the time will come when we shall unearth it again.

HISTORY OF THE BRAIN SPECIALIST DR. B.

THE brain specialist Dr. B. was highly respected by his colleagues. His great reputation was due above all to the exactness of his researches, to the incorruptibility with which he traced important and desired conclusions back to the remotest sources of possible error. Anyone else with his gifts would have made a career for himself. He continued to occupy his chair at a small university. The fault lay with his caustic temperament. Perhaps it was his odd appearance that made him so cantankerous; for he carried a gigantic bearded head on a diminutive trunk. His manner toward his colleagues was marked by indifference, sometimes by positive dislike. Except to talk shop he scarcely ever opened his mouth, and if he did he was uncompromising in his opinions, terse and to the point in his comments on the world about him. Moreover, when well past his youth, he married a woman of an inferior station in life; she was a waitress in the restaurant where he used to snatch his hurried meals. He made no concealment of the fact that he felt happier in his wife's society than in that of his estimable colleagues.

Thus his fiftieth birthday came and went without causing any remark, and it seemed that he would descend, after closing his days without distinction, to an undistinguished grave. But suddenly the rumour spread that Professor B. had made a discovery which might be expected to give a new turn to life throughout the entire world. It was not easy to ascertain how the rumour arose. Presumably Dr. B. had spoken to a younger scientist of the instrument upon which he was working; no more than a hint probably. But a hint from him, as even his enemies allowed, was likely to have more foundation than the arrogant assertions of other men in scientific reports or other such publications.

Professor B. had, if rumour was to be trusted, constructed an apparatus by means of which it was possible to take observations of the cerebral activity of living persons with such accuracy as to give an estimate of a person's intelligence. The instrument came to be called the intelligence-photometer.

The medical journals discussed Dr. B.'s invention, and soon the daily papers took it up. Many prominent men of the political, economic, and scientific worlds read about the intelligence-photometer with distinct uneasiness. Literary, artistic, and musical personages, on the other hand, were undismayed; for it was the fashion of the day to ask nothing more of them than a mysterious, nebulous something which was called creativeness, but was not susceptible of further definition and had certainly nothing to do with intelligence. Professor B. maintained an obstinate silence.

Perhaps it was precisely this silence of his that made people talk more and more and with ever-increasing excitement about the intelligence-photometer—until at last it even came to the ears of the Dictator of the country.

He summoned the physiologist to his presence. Dr. B. regarded the Dictator as a species of gifted, undeveloped boy, whose gifts had certainly suffered from the exercise of power; for Dr. B. shared the opinion of the German philosopher that power makes people stupid. Small, informal, and bearded, he confronted the man whose brazen, domineering mask was adopted by his country as the symbol of greatness.

The Dictator was accustomed in his dealings with people to put on a stiff and heroic air. But he saw at once that it would not impress this testy dwarf, and as he had the sense of style, he adopted a matter-of-fact, everyday manner. This did not quite come off, but the little man noted the attempt with grim satisfaction.

"They tell me," said the Dictator, coming to the point at once, "that by means of your instrument you can measure a person's intelligence by a numerical scale and fix its

limits." He sat massively behind his enormous desk, but his voice came lightly from his well-formed lips. "Can you do that?" he asked casually.

Professor B. answered: "Yes, I can," just as casually.

Naturally the Dictator was at first sceptical. The long expert opinion which lay before him was cautiously phrased, neither credulous nor incredulous. Perhaps it was the Professor's casual, precise tone that swept away the Dictator's disbelief.

"That is a possibility," he said civilly, "which might have great importance for the welfare of the state and the nation."

Professor B. was silent, clearly because the remark was too obvious a one to merit a reply. The Dictator did not find conversation with this sea-urchin very easy. The simplest way was to be direct with him.

"And so," he went on dryly, "if I send certain men to you, you can furnish clearly formulated analyses of their intelligence?"

"I can," replied the Professor.

"I had better tell you," said the Dictator, "in order to avoid any misunderstanding, what I mean by intelligence."

"Do," said Professor B.

"I mean," the Dictator said, and as he picked his words, his face was suddenly that of a diligent schoolboy; "I mean by it the ability to classify the phenomena of the world according to cause and effect."

"That is quite plausibly expressed," Professor B. said approvingly. The Dictator was delighted and the parting was amiable.

From that day on, wherever Professor B. came, went, or stopped still, there appeared obtrusive men wearing bowler hats who did their very utmost to seem unobtrusive, but whom even the children always greeted with the words: "Good morning, Mr. Detective." They amused Professor B. mightily. They were the only people, except his wife, who could boast of being treated in a friendly manner by Professor B.

Soon afterwards the men who had by the Dictator's wish to submit to his analysis began to present themselves at the Professor's laboratory. The process did not take long and was not painful; nevertheless these gentlemen did not all submit with a very good grace. The Dictator sent seven of them in all in the course of two weeks. The Professor did his job and wrote down his formulas with a brief and clear explanation. He transcribed the formulas of six of them accurately, but that of the seventh he arbitrarily twisted into the reverse of the truth.

A month later the Dictator sent for Professor B. a second time. This time his reception was official and pompous. The small, peevish Professor was ushered up the monumental stairway of the castle with assiduous formality after running the gauntlet of salutes from the Dictator's picked guard. Then they were alone together and the formalities ceased. The Dictator was as cordial as ever.

"Why did you try to take me in with Analysis No. 7, Professor?" he asked with sly and jovial good humour, laughing pleasantly. Professor B. laughed too.

The newspapers published the result of the interview. The Dictator, they said, took the liveliest personal interest in Professor B.'s investigations. The Dictator had resolved to make a State monopoly of the scientist's activities for the good of the nation.

A commodious house and a superb laboratory were made ready for the physiologist in the capital. The Minister of Education informed him in glittering terms that his services were of such importance to the State that he was on no account to leave the capital without first informing the Minister. The gentlemen in bowlers were increased by two.

Professor B.'s activities were not exhausting. Now and then people came along whose intelligence he had to analyse at the Dictator's request. What followed therefrom was known neither to the Professor nor to anyone else. It was considered a wry jest in the dictatorial circle when the Dictator sent anyone to be analysed, a subtle reprimand.

"To send a man to Professor B.," became a catch-phrase throughout the country, having the meaning of a humorous, and sometimes also a serious, warning.

A year passed and another after that. The Dictator became an old hand at wielding all the attributes of power; there were only two other men on the planet as adroit as he. He had an efficient army, an excellent police force; every office and every key position in industry throughout the land were occupied by persons whose qualifications as adherents of his own were tested year by year. When he looked on what he had done he might say that he had done well. And yet the Dictator's sleep was not sound, for well as he had done he had not done as well as he wished. The truth was, things went well for his adherents, but not for the country; and his original intention had been that things should go well for everybody.

He paid more and more frequent visits to the physiologist, and found it scarcely more difficult than at first to treat him in a simple and human manner. He laughed a lot when he was with Professor B. No one who knew the Dictator only from his brazen mask had any idea how he could laugh. Professor B. laughed too. Probably the gentleman in bowlers also laughed, for it may be assumed that from somewhere or other they listened in on the conversations.

One evening toward the close of the second year the Dictator dined with the Professor. There was a silence after dinner which was broken by the Professor's saying in his peevish, quizzical manner: "Just tell me straight out what you want with me. We've been playing hide-and-seek for two years now."

At this the Dictator frowned and came within an ace of showing the scientist the mailed fist; but he recovered himself just in time and maintained his simple and human manner. In the third year, one summer evening, when the Professor's wife was away at a distant watering-place, the Dictator said: "How would it be if you took an analysis of *my* intelligence."

Professor B. went a shade paler. "Has it come to that?" he replied.

"Don't you want to?" asked the Dictator.

"I do not," replied Professor B.

The Dictator looked at him, and never had he spoken as man to man with such cordiality. "After all, you can cheat," he said confidentially, with an encouraging smile.

"I don't think," replied the Professor, and he too smiled until his large yellow teeth showed through his beard, "I don't think there would be much good in cheating. I think you would tumble to it."

So the Professor made the analysis at the Dictator's wish. It did not take long, nor did it seem long to the Dictator, but then when he looked back it seemed to have taken very long, for in that space of time he had become young and then old, and then young and then old again. The Professor said as little as possible while recording the measurements. He wrote down the formulas on a sheet of paper. The formulas were quite legible to the Dictator; he knew that they were written in small letters and figures and that there were twenty-three of them.

The Professor wrote his last formula and gave the paper to the Dictator.

"Thank you," said the Dictator. He took the sheet, folded it unread, asked for an envelope, put the folded paper inside it, licked its flap, shook the Professor's hand, and went away.

After his departure Professor B. felt slightly fatigued; yes, his legs were unpleasantly heavy and they trembled; but he did not think of sitting down to get his breath. On the contrary he paced up and down his laboratory, stroking his instruments, and finally he walked all through the house and then into the garden. Normally, if people came in, he found them an interruption and got rid of them as soon as he could. To-day the house seemed very large and the garden very large, and both empty, terribly empty. He tried to telephone to his wife, to his assistants, but as it turned out he could not get in touch with any of them. He

might have expected that. He would have been glad to exchange a word even with one of those obtrusive gentlemen in bowler hats, but even they were absent to-day.

Finally he came upon his old laboratory attendant. He had been with him now for twenty years and Professor B. knew the man's skin, the composition of his blood, and the exact state of his heart and his kidneys. To-day for the first time he inquired into his opinions. He asked him what he thought about God and the other world. It appeared that the laboratory attendant had thought a great deal about them. "I am a man made for belief," he said.

Professor B. was pleased by this remark. He found it straightforward and rational. Now he sat on the terrace, below which lay the garden, and his restlessness passed away. It would not be a bad idea to go for a walk through the streets; but then, he reflected, the bowler hats would be around and he had no longer any desire for their company. So he sat still. He thought of the people who had been with him in recent years, his wife, his assistants. They pleased him. He got on with them. He had even got on with the Dictator. The man acted according to his nature, though it was certainly going a bit far for him to ask his endorsement.

That same evening, before his wife returned and before he had spoken to his assistants, Professor B. fell ill. The morning papers announced that the illness was serious, the evening papers that it was grave, and the morning after, before his wife saw him again, Professor B. was dead. The Dictator paid a visit in the course of the day and had hourly bulletins brought him.

The great scientist was buried with public honours and much pomp.

Two weeks later came the tenth anniversary of the day on which the Dictator had seized power. It was a day of great splendour; his enemies hated him with a peculiar and well-grounded hate, for they had little prospect now of attaining their ends. And many of them hated him merely because they might no longer hope to be his adherents. For

he had closed the list of his adherents; there were so many that he didn't care to have any more.

Earlier, the Dictator had loved these days of great acclamation; they had been his support and endorsement. Now he went through them with a certain impatience; they were no more than political expedients which in his heart he no longer needed. He preferred the short interval in the early afternoon which he had to himself. He spent half this time in gymnastic exercises with his trainer, and then after being massaged he reclined alone in the small, cool room which contained only a couch, a writing-table, and an arm-chair and was entered by no one except one of his secretaries.

He lay there exhausted, vacant, in an agreeable indolence, with nothing brazen about him. Words of command came up half muted from the square as detachments were marched up, ready to do him homage. In twenty-five minutes he had to appear on the balcony and make a speech; he had no idea what he would say, but he knew it would be the right thing and that loudspeakers would transmit his words throughout the world.

He got up. Enveloped in his wrap he walked across to the writing-table. There were mementoes locked up in it, a collection for his own eye only of foolish, trivial things. A few letters, a uniform button flattened by a bullet, an old photograph. He loved these mementoes and was happy to rummage about among them; he felt stronger when he was in physical contact with his earlier days.

He took out a key and then another key, and then from a last and innermost drawer he pulled out a sealed envelope, just a fortnight old. He knew well what was in it. Perhaps it was only for the sake of this envelope he had gone to the writing-table.

He stood for minutes with the unopened envelope containing the formulas of the dead Professor in his hand. Then he picked up a slender paper-knife. It would be interesting to know what was in the envelope. Benefit and wisdom—there were certain theories involved. Professor B. now dead,

knew something about it; had just hinted at it. It might not have been impossible to get Professor B., now dead, to tell him more about it. The Dictator was no fool and the Professor had allowed him talent. The logic of history had imposed power upon him and power makes people stupid. If he had not been a powerful man, who knows, he might have been a great one.

From below came the tumult of the crowd. Time to get dressed—in fourteen minutes he had to make his speech. It would assuredly do his speech no good if he knew the contents of the envelope. The Dictator put down the paper-knife unused, and tore the envelope and its contents into small pieces.

Then he walked through the large reception-room and out on to the balcony and made his speech.

FAITHFUL PETER

THE Marshal was very, very old. The grammar-school readers were full of his deeds. Thousands of streets and squares, and even some towns, were named for him. He was an historical personality. For the last eight years he had been living quietly on his country estate, above the wrangle of current politics.

Then the Fatherland fell into desperate peril, and among the younger men, the sixty- and seventy-year-olds, there was no one whose authority would have been strong enough to save the country from falling into anarchy and destruction. So it was the Marshal the country turned to, imploring him to take the tiller once more into his gnarled, proven old hands.

The Fatherland confronted the Marshal in the form of three gentlemen who explained that it fully realized the magnitude of the sacrifice it was demanding of him, but that it had to demand it, nevertheless. The Fatherland was lost unless he agreed to take over.

The old man stood before them like a living monument. His desires had grown cold. There was no one left whom he loved, few whom he hated, and none whom he did not despise. Most joys of existence meant nothing to him any more. But within him still trembled a faint echo of that sweet feeling of power he had known when he had last held the reins of rulership. That had been eight years ago. It made you feel younger, stronger, more alive, to know that you could change the destiny of hundreds of thousands just by signing your name.

In his heart, therefore, the Marshal was firmly resolved to follow the call of the Fatherland. Outside, the reporters were waiting; his estate was remote, the telephone service of the village had been reinforced. The Marshal knew that the world was holding its breath, waiting for his decision. But ever since he had committed a rash act fifty-three years ago, he had made it an iron rule never under any circumstances to give an immediate answer. In his rusty voice, he told the Fatherland: "You are asking a great deal. I shall give you my answer to-morrow."

No matter what happened, the Marshal always went to bed at ten o'clock. He had done this for a quarter of a century. Only on nine evenings during the war had he deviated from this rule. To-day, too, he retired at ten.

Peter, his valet, undressed him and helped him into his night-shirt. He said, "Then I suppose Your Excellency will have two eggs for breakfast to-morrow."

"You really think we should move back to the Palace, Peter?" the Marshal replied.

"History expects it of Your Excellency," Peter agreed, smoothing the pillow, "and when we moved there the last time, it agreed fairly well with Your Excellency."

"Having to stand up so much during receptions is beginning to tire me," the Marshal said, thoughtfully. "Three weeks ago, when I received the three gentlemen of the Legion, I had to cut short my walk afterwards."

"I should not receive more often than twice a month," Peter replied, "and never longer than fifteen minutes at a

time. To talk over the radio is much less strenuous, and always makes a good impression. When Your Excellency made his speech on the four-hundredth anniversary, everybody was deeply moved, even in those countries where they didn't understand it."

Peter had dropped the Marshal's false teeth into the glass containing the cleansing fluid, and inserted bits of cotton wool in his ears. Now he straightened the writing pad on which the Marshal used to put down, on waking up in the morning, the ideas that had come to him during the night.

The Marshal in the meantime had turned on his right side. "Do you really think they can't do without me?" he asked, while Peter tucked his feet in.

"They can't, Your Excellency," Peter replied.

The Marshal sighed and drew up his knees a little higher, until he lay like an infant in its mother's womb. "All right, then," he said. "Two eggs for breakfast to-morrow."

Peter was fifteen years younger than the Marshal. He had witnessed his master's rise from the time when the Marshal was only a Captain, first as his orderly, and later as his valet. The Marshal had ceased to be a human being long ago; he was a statue, an equestrian statue; and Peter was the horse.

Next to God, it was Peter who knew the Marshal best. He knew what created that feeling of authority which had made the Marshal the historical personality he was. The feeling of authority was created by the rock-like hardness of the great face, and by the commanding calm with which he uttered his infrequent words. The Marshal's words were as cast in bronze. No one could possibly harbour the suspicion that a doubt swayed him. It was impossible to contradict the Marshal.

There had been countless men in the Marshal's life; but within his heart there had always been only one: himself. Peter knew the Marshal's evil heart. He knew that there had been occasions where even a good man, had he been in the Marshal's place, could not have avoided sending hundreds

of thousands to their deaths. But for a good man, it would have been a terrible decision; it wasn't for the Marshal. The hundreds of thousands held no interest for him. The calm with which he sent them to their deaths had not been hard won. If things went wrong, the Marshal shrugged; if his plan succeeded, it was he who accepted the thanks of the Fatherland. He went to bed at ten o'clock and slept well. Peter had had frequent opportunities to observe that.

The Marshal had never been much of a thinker. At the Military Institute, he had been taught that in case of doubt doing something wrong was preferable to doing nothing at all. That was his maxim. He was a fatalist. His affair was to make decisions. The consequences of these decisions were none of his business.

It was probably this monstrous, fatalistic conceit which prompted him to discuss with Peter the decisions he had to make; decisions on which hinged the fate of the nation and of the whole world. The Marshal and Peter came from the same rural province. For centuries, the Marshal's forebears had been the masters there, Peter's forebears the serfs. Peter was a piece of that earth. When talking to Peter, the Marshal talked to himself. He talked to himself sometimes, and with increasing frequency as he grew older.

Peter and the Marshal were very different in their characters and opinions. Peter preferred doing nothing at all in case of doubt to doing something wrong. Peter loved his country. Peter did care about the hundreds of thousands who were being sent to their deaths. Peter was not a fatalist; he believed that by wisdom it was possible to prevent evil and do good. The Marshal was a historical personality. Peter was a human being, a patriot, and intelligent. The Marshal had the power, Peter the brains.

Of course Peter was careful never to let the Marshal suspect his rebellious thoughts. He pretended to be simple-minded. When he spoke, he let the simple wisdom of the people speak through him. He quoted wise saws, related stories from the *Farmer's Almanac*, anecdotes about his father and grandfather, all craftily chosen to influence the

decisions of the Marshal, who did not care about his country, and to guide him according to the ideas of Peter, who did care about his country.

Slowly, Peter's father and grandfather became, in the mind of the Marshal, legendary figures, patriarchs, spokesmen of the ancient wisdom of the people. Through them, Peter ruled the Marshal and the country. The ideas which the Marshal jotted down on his pad on waking in the morning were culled from the wisdom of that father and grandfather; they were Peter's ideas.

When the country placed the old Marshal at the helm, it was almost defenceless in the face of the most terrible dangers. Its citizens were suffering all kinds of outward privations and inner misery. It was amazing with what skill the Marshal, with the help of Peter's father and grandfather, steered the country through all these perils during the first weeks and months of his government. For a while he convinced even his adversaries that their ruler was a man who felt the whole agony of the country, and yet managed to keep his head.

The Marshal's nerves were steel. The agony of the country and the effort of governing agreed with him perfectly; he retired at ten and slept well. Peter did not sleep so well. His post was consuming his strength; the decisions that had to be made at the palace gnawed at his heart. He was fifteen years younger than the Marshal, but even so he was a very old man. The Marshal had only been living at the palace for a short time when one morning Peter did not appear in the Marshal's bedroom to bring him his breakfast. He had joined his father and grandfather.

For a little while the Marshal felt a certain satisfaction. This Peter, in all his life, had never had to do anything harder than the small services his master required, while he, the Marshal, was carrying the agony of the whole country on his shoulders. And yet here he was—fifteen years older than his valet, and he had survived him.

But this feeling of elation did not last very long. Franz,

the new valet, fulfilled his duties as conscientiously as possible. He treated the old man as gently and tenderly as if the withered body had been a holy relic; and yet the Marshal thought him clumsy, and only grudgingly allowed the new man to serve him. He missed Peter. He had been a simple-minded sort of fellow, but through him had spoken the age-old wisdom of the people, and this wisdom had stimulated the mind of the ruler. The Marshal could not get used to the new valet's name, he frequently called him 'Peter' instead of 'Franz,' but still he wasn't Peter, and the Marshal did not permit him to touch the pad on which he wrote down the ideas of the night.

The Marshal had become used to alternating waves of good and bad fortune. The change did not touch him very deeply, but he felt it nevertheless. Peter's death had marked the beginning of a less fortunate period. The Marshal's decisions no longer coincided with the will of the people as surely as they had up to then. Resistance increased, his talks over the radio were less successful, the clouds of incense thinned.

One evening, when he had settled down on his side and Franz had left the room, the Marshal, as was his custom, still kept up his toothless mumbling for a while. "What do you make of it, Peter?" he asked, as he had asked a thousand times before. And Peter answered: "One day my grandfather . . ." and he told one of his stories. The Marshal was surprised to see Peter by his bed again, standing as straight and respectful as ever while telling one of his stories. After all, he was dead. But the Marshal wasn't too surprised. He frequently talked to people who were really dead, and it also happened frequently that he wasn't quite sure whether he was asleep or awake. After all, it was only natural that Peter should go on attending him after the Marshal had honoured him by accepting his services through so many decades. Faithfulness is said to be the marrow of honour, and what kind of faithfulness would it be if it did not endure beyond death?

From then on, the Marshal again talked with faithful

Peter every night. He almost impatiently waited for Franz to go and Peter to take his place. When Franz had left, Peter always came and told the wise and simple-minded tales of his father and grandfather, and the following morning the Marshal picked up the pad and wrote down his ideas in his stiff, large script.

Yet, all in all, the Marshal was no more fortunate in his decisions now than when he had had to get along without Peter. The approval with which the country had greeted his measures when he had still been able to talk to the living Peter seemed lost.

One day, the evil powers decided that the Marshal still was not quite sufficiently yielding and tractable. They asked him to appoint as his chancellor a man who was nothing more than their tool.

The Marshal conferred with the few whom he permitted to approach him. None dared to express an honest opinion. But although the Marshal was not much of a thinker, he realized that he was expected to resign. The general opinion seemed to be that that would be wiser and more honourable than to remain at the head of the government, and thereby sanction the shameful deeds of the chancellor who had been forced on him.

The Marshal did not want to listen to those hints. He had no desire to spend his remaining days on his estate, in the company of his valet. Only a few years were left to him, and they would be empty without that sweet sense of might. He did not like the idea of appointing the fellow the evil powers were urging upon him, but he did not like the idea of going back to his estate, either.

That night the Marshal waited more impatiently than ever for Franz to go. At last, this annoying person had closed the door behind him, and Peter was there. "What do you think, Peter?" the Marshal asked. "Should I appoint the man? He's a most obnoxious creature." Peter replied by telling a story about his grandfather. It was about a house and a vicious dog. You had to take the vicious dog in order

to get the house. The ending wasn't quite clear—it seemed that the grandfather had given up the house. But since the Marshal did not want to hear that, he asked, impatiently: "Well, what did he do? Speak up. You are mumbling so I can't understand a word you say. You're getting old, you know." But Peter kept right on mumbling, and finally the Marshal decided that Peter had said his grandfather had taken the house in spite of the vicious dog.

The Marshal confirmed the appointment of the man, the obnoxious creature, and remained in office. The country was indignant. That night, Peter did not come. The Marshal mumbled something to himself about the ingratitude and unreliability of the people.

When, on the following morning, he picked up his pad in order to make a note of something, he found that the page was full. Tearing it off, he came upon the last page of the pad. But this last page, too, had writing on it. It was the handwriting of somebody else—Peter's writing. "How detestable!—such a wicked old fool," it said.

The Marshal was startled. Of course he had been used to the idea of the dead Peter talking to him, but that the dead man should write hit him very hard. Now he's got the nerve, he thought bitterly. Now he's dead, he's got the nerve—the coward! But the writing on the block had taken something out of him; for the first time since he had moved into the palace, he stayed in bed, and the programme for the day had to be cancelled.

Later, he told himself that there was a perfectly rational explanation for all this. Peter had simply given vent to his impudent feelings while he was still alive. The rascal had counted on being able to make the page disappear in time. But it hadn't worked. He, the Marshal, had lived long enough to unmask his faithless servant.

But that was cold comfort. And what events had not been able to do, that would have broken the heart of any other man, was finally accomplished by Peter's moan from the grave. The old man's self-assurance cracked—and with it his strength.

He remained in office, but permitted himself to be blotted out completely by the man whom he had been forced to appoint—the obnoxious creature. A shadow, he hunched in the palace, and the world realized that the historical personality was nothing more than a uniform hung with a lot of medals.

HERR HANNSICKE'S SECOND BIRTH

FRANZ G. HANNSICKE, a rather bleak young man with a long, pimply face and inflamed, spectacled eyes, was standing in his room in Borsigstrasse, Berlin, one December evening. The room was painted green and contained a bed, a table, and two chairs—representing the cheapest lines of Davidsohn & Sons, the furniture makers. Besides these there was a small and flimsy bookshelf, a wireless set, and a bird-cage—whose inmate, however, was by this time dead.

Franz G. Hannsicke was fed up and tired. He was in favour of a diet rich in vitamins, a believer in the doctrine of the survival of the fittest and in supermen, a member of a political party which engaged in propaganda work for a dictatorship and also of a rational footwear society. By profession he was a bookseller's assistant. He took little pleasure in his profession, for people would not buy the authors he favoured, and when he pressed upon them the war memoirs of a hero or Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, the customer replied that he wanted the book where the scene was laid in East Prussia in a green binding, but it must not cost more than 3.50 marks.

And so, disillusioned by his occupation, embittered by the refusal of an advance in salary which would have enabled him to buy a new suit and in consequence to be elected to the committee of his society; galled, further, by his girl's jilting him because for lack of money he had had to invite her three times in succession to go for a walk instead of to a place of entertainment; exasperated, finally,

by the inadequate heating of his room, Franz G. Hannsicke decided—when, to top it all, the match with which he was about to light the gas wouldn't strike—to make no further attempt, but simply to turn the gas on and his life off without more ado.

The gas escaped with a gentle singing hiss as soon as Franz G. Hannsicke had turned on the tap, which he was able to see quite clearly in the broad shaft of light cutting the room in an unpleasant slant from the street lamp outside. Next Franz G. Hannsicke had a feeling of defiance and triumphant exhilaration. Without hesitation he had taken the first important step in his life and he was in no mood to listen any longer to nonsense about fate. He wondered what the landlady, with whom he had daily trouble over the scrape of butter on his bread, would say; what the bookseller, who had turned down his request for a rise, would think.

He inhaled the sickly smell as it grew stronger and stronger, and tried to calculate how long it would take, looked at his watch, stepping for this purpose into the track of light. Then he considered what a pity it was—a young fellow like himself, intellectual, gifted, and full of the best intentions. The whole fault lay with the bad organization of society and what was wanted was a dictator. What would his funeral be like? He imagined the paragraph in the newspapers; the *Anzeiger*, of course, would barely give him a line, probably without even the mention of his name. He thought he felt a slight dizziness, though perhaps it was only imagination. A vision of men with gas-masks on rose before his eyes.

He took off his spectacles; it seemed more dignified to die without his spectacles. He repeated to himself: The undiscover'd country, from whose bourne no traveller returns, and wondered whether he should lie down on his bed or whether it would be more suitable to arrive in that country seated on a chair. He thought: Death and the Fool —this was the title of a book of which he had sold several copies. There had been a violent scene between him and

his employer because of one copy which a customer was determined to return and he was determined not to take back. Then it occurred to him that this month's gas bill would be pretty high and that the landlady would certainly indemnify herself out of his belongings. It was very sad, he felt, to be dying alone like this; he longed for the sight of a human face and went to the window with a step that was already uncertain—he felt sure—but the people in the street below went silently through the snow like ghosts, as though he were already seeing them in the other world. He heard an indistinct noise from the wireless set and went across to it, positively dragging himself along—it seemed to him—and put the earphones over his projecting ears.

He heard a broad, good-natured provincial voice, discoursing about tortoises. It was odd to think that the last one was to hear of this world was details of the life of tortoises—all the same it was better to pass out to the accompaniment of the human voice than with empty ears. The very small skull, the voice said, was occupied by a brain whose size held no proportion at all to the size of the body. Tortoises weighing ninety pounds had a brain that did not weigh one-seventh of an ounce. Tortoises were among the oldest inhabitants of this planet. They could stand extreme heat and drought, but not great cold. Their muscular strength was amazing. A medium-sized land tortoise could carry a boy seated astride on its back. A really large one could carry several men at once for long distances without trouble. They could survive for incredibly long periods without eating, and indeed without breathing. Even after the most frightful mutilation they continued to function for months exactly as though they were uninjured. Their vitality was so tremendous that in the Botanical Gardens of Paris a mud turtle lived for six years without nourishment.

The book salesman, Franz G. Hannsicke, with the earphones still over his projecting ears, dragging the instrument after him, and breathing hard through his nose, this time really tottered to the window, threw it open, drew a deep

breath, walked back, and turned off the gas-cock. He felt a slight nausea, but also a sense of overwhelming exaltation and ravenous hunger. There was still a faint sweetish smell in the room and there still came a voice from the wireless set. He pulled on his thin shabby overcoat. Now for a glass of beer or perhaps even wine, and then to a dance-hall to look for another girl.

As he left the flat his landlady came in. "Did you know," he shouted cheerily at her, "that a tortoise could carry several men on its back?" The woman thought he was being personal and made an abusive rejoinder.

Meanwhile, the broad, good-natured, slightly provincial voice concluded its discourse on tortoises. Tortoises, it said, were greatly sinned against; for people wrongly took their powers of endurance to be a sign of unwavering health. But the tortoise was highly sensitive to seemingly unimportant influences. Only it suffered very slowly. And from this it was falsely assumed that it could endure anything.

THE AUNT WHO TOLD LIES

WHENEVER Aunt Melitta's visit was expected, we children knew that we could look forward to a delightful minor sensation, although one with an unpleasant aftermath.

Aunt Melitta was a lady of medium build, rather thin, with strong features, black hair that was greying fast, although she was only in her thirties, and large, bright, piercing eyes that sometimes assumed a far-away expression. Every time she came, Aunt Melitta—who, incidentally, was not a real aunt, but a cousin of my father's—brought us presents, not practical things, but delightfully useless ones. Moreover, she had interesting tales to tell. She had seen a great deal, many cities and people. And when she told stories of trees and flowers—she was a botanist—they were not boring like at school, but interesting and full of suspense.

The life of certain flesh-eating plants, and the way she presented it, was full of sensational adventures, and we listened with bated breath when she told of the miraculously fast growth of the tropical jungle.

I vividly remember one story in particular which we made her tell four or five times. It was the story of a Spanish expedition of the seventeenth century that became lost in the jungle. The jungle closed in around them so fast that in no time at all the members were separated from each other by the tropical vegetation growing with savage speed. Finally they were even unable to move, and were literally swallowed by the forest.

It was even more interesting when Aunt Melitta told of things that had happened to her personally. For no man or woman lived who had experiences like hers. For instance, she would tell of someone who had hurled himself from a window and had dragged her with him in his suicidal leap. Or a snake had escaped from a travelling circus, and had wound itself around her body—she was saved from a horrible death only in the nick of time. On another occasion, a madman had mistaken her for a statue, and had threatened to shoot her if she moved—she wasn't supposed to do that, for she was a statue. These were the kind of adventures she had during the short intervals between her visits with us.

We had it figured out very soon that Aunt Melitta, who could tell of places and people, and particularly plants, with scientific accuracy, was simply inventing all these stories. As soon as we discovered this, we tried to involve her in contradictions, and to make her tell increasingly fantastic tales. She would make every effort to prove that her adventures were true. Her light grey eyes would grow more and more piercing; they would gaze into the distance, as if searching for new facts to reconcile contradictions that had been pointed out to her. But eventually, when she was cornered, the light would go out of her eyes, and she would sit there, discouraged and almost desperate. But we would feel deep satisfaction—now she was punished for her lying.

We got a kick out of leading her on. Immediately after

she arrived, we would ask her if she had any interesting adventures during the past week. We watched her with cruel delight as she tried to evade us, as she fought the temptation to tell another of her fantastic stories. But we refused to give in until finally, to our delight and satisfaction, she was unable to resist any longer. She couldn't hold back —she had to tell her story, and she did.

Then came the second part of the performance. We showed her our disbelief. We attacked and tortured her; she defended her lies, not good-humouredly, but in all earnestness. And we did not hide our wicked joy when she finally sat there, cornered and shamed, a proven liar.

We were admonished by our father, both in a friendly way and with severity, to stop this wicked game of ours. But in vain; neither threats nor our own good intentions were of any avail. It was too great a temptation to ask Aunt Melitta about her adventures of to-day and yesterday. We couldn't help noticing that even our parents, much against their will, would be carried away, and would watch, in suspense, as Aunt Melitta resisted, first strongly, then more and more weakly, until finally she yielded to temptation.

When I became a little older, my father took me aside for a heart to heart talk. He explained how Aunt Melitta, so sensible in all other respects, had acquired that peculiarity of hers. When she was very young, soon after she married, she went to China with her husband, a botanist, who had got a job as an expert on a large plantation. Soon after they arrived, the Boxer Rebellion broke out, and he lost his life in a horrible manner. Aunt Melitta was one of the few white women who escaped alive, but she was in a bad way and her nerves were shattered. Just what had happened to her, no one could find out exactly. She spent some time at an institution, and since her discharge she had been in her present condition. She herself never spoke of what she had gone through. If, during a conversation, China was mentioned, or events that were similar to those she may have experienced, she would lapse into stony silence, and soon leave the company. Obviously she felt a compulsion to

speak of her horrible experience, but unconquerable inhibitions prevented her from doing so. Those fantastic stories she would tell were nothing but a safety valve by which her suppressed urge sought release.

But in spite of all the respect one felt for the bright and friendly Aunt Melitta, and in spite of all our sympathy for her, it was still fascinating to experience the phenomenon of her lying, to provoke it, to show it off to others. Only when I grew older did I learn to regard her peculiar performances with less curiosity and more compassion. From then on, I tried to help her as best I could. I soon found out that nothing pained her more than when she was forced to produce proof of her stories, or when she was caught in contradictions. She was grateful, however, if one first pretended to listen to her tales with interest, and then unostentatiously changed the subject.

Later, when it developed that I possessed a certain amount of creative talent, I found in Aunt Melitta an intelligent, understanding, and well-meaning adviser. She insisted that, in whatever I wrote, I adhere to the strictest inner truth, under all circumstances. With unfailing instinct, she would discover the slightest false note in my writing. I owe her a great debt of gratitude.

Then came Hitler. Although they would probably have left her in peace, Aunt Melitta could not bear the great lie that life in Germany had become. She went to France. There she continued living in her accustomed manner, went on with her botanical studies and her telling of tall tales.

Then came the war and the Nazi invasion of France. Aunt Melitta stayed on too long; when the Nazis came she was interned by the French authorities. It must have been quite an ordeal for an old woman to be interned in a French concentration camp. The mortality rate there was higher than at the French front.

The last time I saw Aunt Melitta was in New York. She had managed to escape. She had aged considerably. She was in the company of two women who had been interned with

her in France. The women told of their horrible experiences, of how they were starved in camp, of the epidemic of dysentery that raged there, of how they became stuck in the mud when they dragged themselves to the latrines. Whenever a woman gave birth to a baby, the others did not even get their miserable coffee ration because the hot water was needed for the woman in labour. Aunt Melitta chided her companions. "Oh, stop it. It wasn't as bad as all that," she said, and changed the subject. Later, those women told me how energetic and helpful she had been in camp.

Many people looked up Aunt Melitta, congratulated her upon her escape, and questioned her about her experiences. She refused flatly, almost rudely, to talk of them. Instead, she told her tall tales again, this time adapted to life in this country. For instance, she told that she had overheard two Nazi spies talking in Central Park. They were planning to blow up the Douglas Aircraft factory in Santa Monica and the synagogue on Fifth Avenue, both at the same time. Since then, in a mysterious manner, the tyres on the little car she used for her botanical excursions were slashed again and again. Another time, she was kidnapped by two youths. When they found that they couldn't get any ransom money for her, they made a bet as to how high an old lady could jump. Then they made her jump until she fainted.

It was strange to hear such tales from the lips of dignified old Aunt Melitta. People soon found out about this peculiarity of hers; they had their fun with her and goaded her into inventing more and wilder adventures. She fared no better on this side of the ocean than she had done on the other.

A short time ago she died from eating a dish of poisonous mushrooms. She got them as a present from some people she met by accident on one of her excursions in search of botanical specimens. At first no one would believe the story; we figured that she must have fooled a reporter. But then it turned out that she, a botanist, had actually died in that manner. This death was her third and last real adventure.

"It is curious," Lenore said, "that during the whole seven years of our acquaintance you have not once given a woman in your books my features." She was speaking airily, casually, and she was smiling with just a hint of challenge as she looked Ludwig Bryggmann in the face. They were at their after-dinner coffee in Lenore's little yellow smoking-room. There were three of them—Lenore, Bryggmann, the writer, and Falk, the engineer. There had been a good deal of pleasant gossip at the table, and now there was a tendency toward frankness.

"Yes, it is strange," Ludwig Bryggmann replied, without returning Lenore's smile. "Frankly, I was tempted on several occasions to lend your face to one or the other of my women—your voice, your gait—especially to Hildegard in *Missed Opportunities*."

"And why didn't you do it?" Lenore asked.

"I'll tell you," replied Ludwig Bryggmann, his voice a little subdued, still unsmiling. "I am not superstitious, as you know, and my books plainly show that I don't exactly live in a world of magic. But there is one point on which I can't get rid of certain notions—call them superstitions, if you will. In several cases I have had the experience that people whom I took as my models eventually met the very fate I gave them in my books. And since I wanted to spare you, Lenore, the fate of my Hildegard, for example, I reluctantly refrained from making you the heroine of *Missed Opportunities*."

Lenore pondered for a brief while. But before she could reply, Hermann Falk was already speaking. "So there you sit, my dear Bryggmann," he said, "a little god, guiding the destinies of your puppets." He was making an effort to be objective, but an ironic undertone had crept into his words, and a barely perceptible supercilious smile passed

over his large appealing face with its flattened, leonine nose. Hermann Falk and Ludwig Bryggmann, the writer, met often, mostly here in Lenore's house, and they were intimate old friendly enemies. Hermann Falk was an able and successful engineer. His white hair only served to underscore his virile youthfulness. Lenore liked him a great deal, though he showed a little too loudly and plainly that he was quite aware of his own worth.

"Perhaps it is superstition," Ludwig Bryggman replied mildly. "I already admitted as much. But, willy-nilly, I feel responsible for the fate of my characters and of those who serve me as models. Occasionally it is rather disconcerting, but sometimes it is pleasant too; you are quite right, my dear Falk." He sat still, in an effort to speak modestly, but he looked Falk full in the face—with a profound inner arrogance, it seemed to Falk. Falk thought he noticed, furthermore, that this stuff and nonsense Bryggmann had thought up was making an impression on Lenore. It irked him.

"Such notions of magic," he said, speaking like a grown-up to a child, "have always been current. And it has always been artists and poets who have made it their business to spread them around. There is no essential difference, my dear Bryggmann, between what you call your superstition and the pretensions of a medicine man who persuades his primitive tribesmen that he is able to conjure up blessings or misfortunes for them."

"That may be so," Bryggmann admitted peaceably.

But Lenore was pleading: "Tell us a little more about your medicine men. Tell us some stories and examples."

Falk looked up, the flat, broad nose slightly distended. He was famous for his excellent memory; he was considered a walking encyclopædia and he frequently gave proof of this ability of his—a little too frequently. And now, too, he unearthed before Lenore and Bryggmann, from his broad, precise memory a number of stories he had heard or read—stories of prophets and conjurers, of charlatans and men who were obsessed, stories of successful and unsuccessful experiments.

"And these reports of miracles and predictions that came true—do you really believe, my dear Falk, that they were all cut from the whole cloth?" Lenore said when he had finished.

"It may be, of course," the engineer conceded patronizingly, "that one or the other of these men of whom I have been speaking really was convinced of his ability to bend destiny to his will, just as does our friend Bryggmann. Most of them, moreover, may well have interpreted later events in good faith to suit their purposes. Few people are able to present an event objectively if they themselves are involved in it." And he shrugged his shoulders. Bryggmann offered no reply. His face was inscrutable.

It was Lenore who put Falk in his place. "I believe," she said, "that there is a perfectly natural, plausible explanation for our friend Bryggmann's magic faculties. Any writer worthy of the name possesses intuition and a knowledge of human nature. He is likely to let the characters in his books act in accordance with their nature, to let them get into situations that are in accordance with their nature. Thus there is nothing particularly strange about the fact that in the end the fictional experiences of the people in an author's books coincide with the real ones of their models."

Bryggmann seemed to have become vexed at the discussion of what he had incautiously revealed. "Be that as it may," he resumed dryly, "I hesitate to use you, my dear Lenore, for one of my books." The engineer, however, for the very reason that he sensed the discussion to be unwelcome to the writer, now could no longer be diverted from the subject. He thought to prove to this loud-mouthed Bryggmann, in Lenore's presence, that his talk was no more than nonsensical vapourings.

"How about telling us a few cases," he turned to Bryggmann, "that bear out your contention—what you call your superstition?"

"I could state quite a number of such cases," the writer replied calmly, "however, they deal with people whom Lenore and you know but slightly or not at all. I am sure

that you would concede my good faith, my dear Falk; on the other hand I am just as sure your scepticism would lead you to assume that all was imagination and that I had subsequently arranged the facts to suit my point."

"Don't evade the issue," Falk persisted, "let's have an example of your magic. Lenore, too, would be grateful to you. I fully appreciate your hesitation in using our Lenore. But why not use someone else?" He made a pause, a faint smile passed over his face. "Myself, for example," he concluded.

Quickly and unwittingly, Lenore bent forward and raised her hand. "Don't, Falk," she said. For an instant Falk was dismayed and hesitated to continue, and she went on: "Don't be frivolous."

But her warning provoked him even more. If he were now to beat a retreat, he thought, Lenore might believe that the whimsies of this overbearing poet and fool had impressed him too. As a believer in sound common sense, was it not his plain duty to demonstrate the absurdity of this primitive superstition of Bryggmann's? "Frivolous?" he sneered. "It is precisely because I am the very opposite of frivolous," he explained to Lenore, "that I am asking him for a test. Seriously, Bryggmann," he turned to the writer, "let us make an experiment. If you are right, Bryggmann," he continued insistently, "if there is more behind your words than a bizarre notion of the moment, my whole world would topple. Indeed, our entire world of reason would collapse, for it is built upon the belief in cause and effect. If but one iota of your contention were true, the experiences of my whole life have been false. I should no longer be able to trust my eyes and my brain; I would have to give up building bridges; it would be all over with me."

"There is quite definitely an element of truth in my 'superstition'," Bryggmann replied dryly, almost rudely. "I am convinced that one who has a knowledge of a person's nature and environment also has some prescience about that person. If I did not believe in this, I would have to give up writing. But I am not given to proselytizing, and I don't

care to convince you. Let me have my superstition, my dear Falk, and I shall let you have your faith in cause and effect."

But Falk insisted stubbornly: "No, no, you can't get out of it as easily as that. You'll have to stand up and deliver. You must show us a test. Give me a destiny," he worked himself up, "whatever you wish to make it. Let me experience whatever you regard appropriate for me. You have my consent, Bryggmann. I give my approval, do you hear? —I shall not reproach you in the slightest. Let us make a wager. If you are right, if, let us say, in the course of five years after publication any of the incidents you invent for me come true, I shall be at your disposal. Then you may say to me: 'No more bridge-building,' or: 'Get out of this house and don't ever let Lenore see you again.' I shall do whatever you ask of me. Lenore here shall be our witness. If, on the other hand, you are wrong and none of the incidents in your book happen to me, then you will have overreached yourself, and then," and his leonine countenance was now distorted in a sneer, "you shall buy me a bottle of wine."

"You do believe in your bridges and in cause and effect," Lenore said.

But Falk kept on urging: "Here, let's shake hands on it. Come on, make it a deal."

Bryggmann looked the agitated man in the face. He felt no sense of injury; rather, he was surprised. "So you really regard all we do as mere soap bubbles and pastime?" he wondered.

"Dreams and pastime," Falk said.

"Strange," Bryggmann said. "Don't you understand? I could not just put you through any experiences that I deem proper, not even if I wanted. I can only shape them from what I find within you, and really, Falk, after what you have said, I'm almost anxious to try." He turned to Lenore, summarizing dryly. "You are witness, Lenore. Our friend Falk authorizes me to put him through whatever experiences I see in him. Is that correct?" he asked Falk.

"Yes, yes, yes," Falk replied impatiently.

"Well, I am not certain," Bryggmann pondered, "whether I'll make use of your authorization, but it is possible that I'll 'do' you in a book. You are sure you approve?" he insisted once more.

"And how," the engineer said unceremoniously, with a superior air of amusement, "go to it, my boy," he added, slapping Bryggmann on the shoulder.

At times Ludwig Bryggmann, the writer, was quite expansive; but at other times he stubbornly retreated into his shell, keeping his friends in the dark as to what he was doing and working on. Thus Falk, the engineer, knew nothing about Bryggmann's next book. When it appeared at last, he thumbed through it in some suspense and even a little anxiety, though he laughed at himself. But he was quite unable to discover a single character in the book that bore even the slightest resemblance to him. Nor in Bryggmann's next book. Whenever Falk or Lenore alluded to their conversation, Bryggmann maintained a stubborn silence, and Falk gradually came to forget about the wager.

But then, some two and a half years after that evening a new novel by Bryggmann, *The Reichstag Session*, was published. Among the secondary characters in this book was a politician, a deputy, who was both loved and feared on account of his infallible memory. Bryggmann had named him Krausneck. From his broad and precise memory Krausneck was invariably able to dig up arguments to defend his friends and strike at his enemies. No one was proof against being nailed on a contradiction by him. Krausneck, the politician, as portrayed by Bryggmann, seemed to know all about men. With sure-footed logic he showed up their contradictions and inconsistencies. Actually however, he knew nothing about either men or things. Everything with him was memory, stored-up dead reference material, arranged with legalistic cunning for the needs of the moment. It was all pseudo-logic. Of the colourful and meaningful confusion of the world, of the thousandfold

threads from which a soul is woven—of these things Krausneck had not the least idea.

Bryggmann had not distorted the figure of his politician, Krausneck, into a caricature. He presented him without mockery, with a mild, barely perceptible smile. Krausneck was a man of considerable appeal. His white hair only served to underscore the virile youthfulness of his broad, leonine face. Perhaps he was a little too well aware of his own effect, but that in no wise detracted from his ingratiating vitality. The friends of Hermann Falk recognized him in this Krausneck at first sight—a Falk who had been drawn without venom, rather with love.

What happened to Krausneck-Falk in Bryggmann's novel, *The Reichstag Session*, was this: in consequence of an automobile accident, he lost his memory. At first the doctors thought it was but a passing impairment, but it proved to linger on. Krausneck's attempts to find his way through his lost memory, his helpless groping and searching for a word, a name, a date, a fact—all this was presented in Bryggmann's book with sharp objectivity, with great calm, compellingly, convincingly. The consideration with which Krausneck-Falk was treated by his friends and acquaintances, the pity behind which they sought to hide their impatience, their lame attempts to help him over his misfortune.

Hermann Falk read. He read, for example, how Krausneck, the politician, goes to call on a woman for whom he cares. He has thought up something he wants to say to her —a certain sentence, linked to a certain little thing that had once happened between them. It was a pretty sentence, cut to her measure, bound to please her, but now that he is with her, the sentence will not come to his mind. He searches and searches; he observes that she is bored; frantically he probes every nook and cranny of his blasted memory for the pretty, winning words; they are there, he knows it for certain, but he cannot find them; he searches with rising anxiety as his conversation grows lamer. The woman remains polite and amiable, but the effect of which he was once so sure is now completely absent. In the end the

woman leaves, while Krausneck, the politician, still searches for his pretty sentence. In the middle of the night he wakes up—he has found the sentence in his dreams—but now it is gone again.

Hermann Falk read. He was alone. Nevertheless his broad, virile face showed derision—a little, nervous, ironic smile, as though, even in his solitude, he wanted to reassure himself how senseless it all was, and that he had nothing whatever to do with this Krausneck. All right, he was a little conceited, but what an absurd idea of Bryggmann to 'punish' his Krausneck for this failing. Strange, what childish, magic, religious notions were still alive to-day in full-grown men. A man loses his memory because he has been too proud of it. He must be challenging the envy of the gods. Crime and Punishment. Yet Bryggmann was undoubtedly a good writer. He made one feel how Krausneck felt. Perhaps he, Hermann Falk, might actually some day lose his memory—it was quite possible. But such things happened only when one grew old—around sixty-five or so—and he was only forty-six. By the time the term of the wager had expired, he would be but fifty-one.

A few days later Falk visited a woman for whom he cared. The lady was counted fickle, arrogant and coy. Falk felt in good form. He sparkled; he disciplined himself for conquest; his memory obeyed his every whim; everything was there. He could see the woman beaming at him—he felt her yielding. 'Bryggmann will have to pay up for that bottle of wine,' he laughed deep inside.

Another two years later the party of brute force came to power in Germany. Hermann Falk had little interest in politics, but he was not minded to be muzzled and reined, and his good memory showed him at every step how contradictory was the speech and bearing of the group now in power. He made no secret of his opinions. The powers that be allowed him to carry on for some time—they had other things to do, and his work was appreciated and necessary to them. But by and by it became too well known

that Falk, the engineer, was getting away with a great deal, and the powers could no longer pretend ignorance. They warned him once, then a second time. They circumscribed his activities. In the end they put him in a concentration camp.

There he met his old friend Bryggmann, who had been put behind barbed wire by the new overlords during the very first months.

Bryggmann was tranquil and patient, inwardly confident. But this only served to provoke the crude, brutal louts who were their guards, and they treated him particularly badly. He submitted and accepted his lot. His camp mates esteemed him, but since he was calm and reasonable and did not complain and paid little attention to irresponsible rumours, he was not very popular.

All the more popular was Hermann Falk. He talked with everyone; he liked to talk and he talked a great deal; he was loud and amiable, and even some of the ungainly guards were won over by his charm. Hermann Falk eagerly discussed the smallest rumour; he shared the despair of his camp mates and with them clung to every straw of hope.

Yet it took him the greatest expenditure of effort to continue exhibiting his usual loud and charming nature. When he was alone, his breakdown was all the more complete. During the nights he rebelled against his fate in insensate fury. He could not comprehend that this should happen to him, Hermann Falk. The course of political events constituted an injustice committed against him personally. He revolted against it; he consumed himself; and though outwardly he seemed as strong as ever, he was inwardly destroyed by his unruly soul.

Falk was friendly and obliging toward everyone, a good comrade; but when he was with Ludwig Bryggmann, he was moody, stubborn, vicious. Bryggmann seemed to irritate him; he attacked the writer without the slightest cause; he derided him. Sometimes Bryggmann had the impression that Falk saw in him, Bryggmann, the cause of all misfortune. Yet Falk quite obviously sought Brygg-

mann's company. Before Bryggmann he let himself go; he could pour out his heart, complain, rage, rebel.

Neither was young any longer. Bryggmann was past fifty, Falk close to fifty. Yet to outward appearances the vigorous, sinewy Falk bore up much worse under the rigours of camp life than Bryggmann, who was rather weakly but tough. In the end Falk fell into physical decay. His broad face with the small, flattened, leonine nose grew wrinkled, and his white hair no longer contrasted with his face. Bryggmann, on the other hand, grew harder and seemed taller than before.

Bryggmann, the writer, had a name that was known throughout the world. There were many who tried to get him out of the camp. In the end they succeeded; the German authorities released Bryggmann, who went to England.

He put forward every effort to win freedom for Falk too. It was difficult, but after a few failures this too was successful. Falk was released, and after a while he, too, came to England.

Bryggmann lived in Cumberland, in the Lake District. Falk at first remained in London. Bryggmann heard that the engineer had become his old self again, vigorous, handsome, loud, confident, perhaps even less tolerant of contradiction than ever.

A few months later, during a short visit to London, Bryggmann met the engineer. Falk looked just as he had been described. His broad face with its leonine nose had grown much younger again, and his thick white hair merely served to underscore his virile youthfulness. He was loud and self-confident too, just as he had been described. He slapped Bryggmann on the shoulder; he had a patronizing air; and he had not a single word of gratitude.

They talked about the camp. Bryggmann soon noticed that Falk, who was usually very precise in his chronology, mixed up events. When Bryggmann on one occasion corrected the name of a guard—Falk had mentioned a wrong name, and Bryggmann thought it was a slip of the tongue—Falk contentiously insisted on the wrong name.

Later, when they talked of fellow-prisoners, Falk slid over the names; then he began speaking of 'Thingummy' and 'What's-his-name'; then again he searched painfully for a name and in the end impatiently and imperiously asked Bryggmann: "Well, why don't you help me?"

And finally, when Bryggmann was about to leave, Falk sneered triumphantly: "Weren't you the one who predicted a bad end for me? Now, who was right? Who lost the bet?" And when he saw Bryggmann's astonished face, he continued: "Of course, now you don't want to remember. You would even deny it. Didn't we make a bet, you and I? That night with that woman—what was her name? I can't think of the name. It will come to me. Damn it, what was her name?"

THE STEWARD ANTONIO

My American lecture tour had been a great strain. I felt exhausted and longed for the rural peace of my home in southern France. As soon as I had carried out my commitments in the States, I took the first available ship to cross.

It was a small steamer, but still, it was more comfortable than I had expected. I liked strolling about the promenade deck by myself; I liked to loll in a deck chair watching the waves; I liked to take my meals without having to keep up a conversation with every Tom, Dick, and Harry.

There was only one small annoyance. The steward who waited on me irritated me beyond measure. He was a man of about forty; a massive head surmounted his stocky body; his black hair grew far into his low forehead which was creased by deep furrows; his square face gave an impression of flatness; and his small nose seemed to be pushed in beneath resentful brown eyes. Apparently he was a Spaniard or a Portuguese. At any rate, he was on bad terms with the English language, frequently misunderstanding even simple

orders and bringing the wrong thing. He was slow-moving, and his clumsy body was by no means equal to the job of threading his way through the dining-room of a swaying ship, loaded tray in hand. I counted myself lucky when a meal passed without some dish or beverage spilling over my suit.

The passengers muttered at the awkward man or shrugged their shoulders in resignation. As for myself, I held my peace, though on occasion my expression must have betrayed some slight annoyance. It was no use arguing with the steward. Beyond question he was quite well aware of the damage he did in each instance. For after every mishap a strained expression of accusatory bitterness appeared on his fleshy perspiring face. The whole man had an air of thoughtfulness, of sorrowful contemplation—qualities that certainly made the practice of his profession no easier. Then, too, on occasion he would scrutinize us with an intensity calculated to create a personal relationship —a mode of behaviour by no means seemly in a steward.

The steward's incompetence did not long remain a secret from his superior, the chief steward, a man of considerable energy. He apologized to me, explaining that he had had to hire the man at the last moment, without being able to examine his qualifications, and that the man would be fired as soon as the ship made port. Under other circumstances I might have said something conciliatory in reply—"It's not half so bad—why don't you give him another chance?" or something of the kind. But I was still tired and hyper-sensitive by reason of the strain I had undergone. Thus the steward's clumsiness had annoyed me beyond measure and I dryly remarked to the chief steward: "You would do well to get rid of him."

I never did learn whether the chief steward said anything about this talk to the steward Antonio—he had told me his name. But it seemed to me that from that day on Antonio looked at me with sorrow, bitterness, and reproach, as though my petty resentment had disappointed him. Even

before, I had sometimes the uncomfortable feeling that Antonio regarded and treated me as though he and I were united by some strange fellowship. Now the impression deepened.

I said to myself that that was pure imagination. Antonio was resentful by nature, and his ill humour was directed no more against me than against the whole world. It was purely my own romantic bent, I said to myself, that read mysterious psychological motives into his conduct. But such considerations were of no avail to me. The strange hostile fellowship that I thought I read in Antonio's sad fleshy face infected me more and more profoundly. The simplest method would have been to have a straightforward, frank talk with the man; but that seemed too absurd to me. Instead, I silently reproached myself for ever having made any utterances against him. Most likely he would lay the blame for his dismissal at my doorstep. That would have been quite wrong, for his incompetence was obvious. Even had I made an effort to stand up for him, the chief steward would not have been likely to change his mind. Nevertheless, even though my reason told me that I was innocent, I was troubled by a guilty conscience. I felt profoundly disturbed whenever I laid eyes on the ponderous, woebegone man. I was no longer able to enjoy the peaceful crossing.

But then at last I was home. In the quiet of my room, with my work and my books, the mournful image of the steward Antonio slowly faded from my mind.

Several months later I spent a few days in Paris on business. While waiting for the lights to turn, I caught sight of a well-known, grave face on the rear platform of a passing bus. It took me a second or two before I realized that it was Antonio, and instantly the old feelings surged up again—the old sense of guilt. I was assailed by all the fears and secret gratifications caused by the strange case which the steward Antonio had brought against me before the tribunal of his mind.

I told myself that Antonio in all likelihood must have long forgotten the whole incident. Presumably he had pro-

cured a better and more suitable position. I was a fool. But rational considerations were unable to erase my profound uneasiness.

With great difficulty I found out Antonio's address and invited him to visit me. He replied in awkward French—the time I had suggested did not suit him. Instead he fixed another hour, an hour for which I had arranged a rather important appointment. I cancelled the other appointment and waited for the steward Antonio.

There he was at last, stolid and sombre. I wondered why I had burdened myself with this irksome interview. Antonio on his part did not seem surprised at all. Though he did not say so in so many words, he rather looked as though he had expected my summons. The hulking man had a greater gift of expressing his character and emotions by his manner and gestures than many an actor.

He stood silent, the sullen mask of his square face with its puny nose, brown eyes, and deeply furrowed brow emphasizing his resentment. I had to pull every word out of him. It was his mulishness rather than his lack of knowledge of the language that made conversation difficult.

Finally I asked him point-blank whether he felt that I was the cause of his dismissal. With a morose look, startled by my futile question, he muttered laconically: "Of course." Did he not agree that he would have been fired even without my intervention? Possibly, he replied, but it was I who had been the final cause of his misfortune. Unreasonable as this thrust was, I realized instantly that I would never succeed in dissuading him from his conclusion. I gave up.

I asked him whether he felt he had lost much. After all, he was not born to be a steward. His only reaction to the question was a statement that he was in love with his profession. When I looked at him in doubt and surprise, he added: "As a writer you ought to be able to understand that. I am interested in people," he continued mysteriously, as though it were the most natural thing in the world. "Somehow, one has to bridge the gulf," he said.

I thought at first I had misunderstood his atrocious French. "I beg your pardon?" I asked.

But he repeated unmistakably: "Somehow, one has to bridge the gulf."

Now I understood that I had not been mistaken on the boat. Antonio did believe in a strange, unique affinity between himself and me.

He looked shabby. It was evident that he was not doing well. He was doorman for a second-rate night club somewhere in Montmartre. Again, though he did not say so in words, his whole demeanour expressed the conviction that I was to blame for his decline.

My conscience is neither callous nor unduly sensitive. I certainly do not believe in hitting a man who is down. Granted that my remark to the chief steward had not been very charitable, it had done no harm. The man would have been fired in any event. Why not leave the foolish innuendo as it was? I decided not to concern myself with Antonio any longer, but simply to send him away.

With that thought in mind I heard myself saying: "Now listen, Antonio, perhaps I can hire you as a kind of butler for my house. There are always things to do in a house with so many guests."

What nonsense was this I was talking? The whole idea was utter foolishness. What would I do with this clumsy oaf? Why had I added the flourish about 'many guests'? Was it my intention to tempt him? I had no real use for him. He would only loaf about and get underfoot.

Nevertheless I felt a strange sense of gratification. I had made my offer, the die had been cast—henceforth Antonio would always be with me. From the very outset of our acquaintance he had hinted at a mystic tie between us. He was right.

Matters took precisely the turn I had expected. There was little for Antonio to do in my house. Most of the time he stalked about doing nothing, though he tried to be of whatever use he could. Despite his taciturnity and peevish demeanour, he even displayed a certain affection. On the

other hand he took many liberties. He behaved not as an employee toward his employer, but somewhat like a discontented older relative toward a difficult young man. Without losing any words about it, he was evidently set upon playing a part in my life that could not be filled by anyone else.

During the summer months the coast of southern France, where I lived, was visited by many of my friends and acquaintances and, for better or worse, I was obliged to entertain extensively. Naturally the summer leisure brought much gossip and jealousy into my little place, nor was it always easy to know whom to show in and whom to send off. Clumsy as he was, Antonio showed a distinct flair for this task. He kept the bores at a distance, encouraged the timid, and, all in all, revealed himself as well suited for services of a discreet nature.

Towards the summer's end a woman whom I had casually met in Berlin, Paris, and London, made her appearance in my little village. I had never paid particular attention to her—a failure that now, in the southern summer, seemed almost incomprehensible to me. For Clarissa at once struck me as the most desirable of all women.

I first saw her in one of the colourful little cafés down by the beautiful bustling harbour. She was surrounded by so many people that I had little opportunity to talk to her. I saw her a second time at a snobbishly primitive garden party. Frankly, I had only gone because I had hoped to meet her there. And, indeed, I did find the occasion to chat with her at some length. She was a little peeved because I had failed to take notice of her before. She flirted with me, but put me off. Not without irony, she pretended regret at not having time for me, now that I was paying attention to her—she was planning to leave the following week.

I readily saw through her pose, and I grew very insistent in asking her to meet me some time during the few remaining days. She did not refuse me, but pretended not to have her engagement book at hand. She could not or would not tell me just when I might meet her. She lived

in a house without a telephone, loaned to her by a friend, less than an hour's distance from the harbour. She rejected my suggestion that I drop in on her at random. In the end we agreed that I was to send her a messenger whom she would tell when she had time for me.

Here was a job for Antonio. I noticed that he seemed a little taken aback when I gave him Clarissa's name. "Do you know the lady, Antonio?" I asked.

"I have seen her a few times in the village," he replied, with an effort to keep his face as imperturbable as is proper for a good servant on such occasions. Nevertheless it was clear that he disliked Clarissa. I impressed him with the fact that I was greatly concerned about the appointment, and instructed him to agree to any hour Clarissa might suggest.

When he returned in the evening I inquired anxiously as to the hour that had been fixed. He replied in his sullen manner that Clarissa had not yet made up her mind and had asked him to call again the following day. I was annoyed, but realized that she sought to make me feel her power in return for my having slighted her so long by my indifference.

The following day Antonio set out again to call on her. Upon his return he insisted that he had not been able to see the lady at all. The house had been locked, and people at a neighbouring farm had told him that she had left in the company of a friend early in the morning for a swim. He had inquired where she was accustomed to go swimming, but had failed to find her when he visited the place named. I did not utter a word, but inwardly I raged. Here was the old Antonio again, obstinate and clumsy. "I shall drive out there myself to-morrow," I said.

But the following day there turned out to be something wrong with the car. I was unable to drive it, and the two village taxis were away and beyond reach. Clarissa had forbidden a surprise visit, so even to drive out would have meant taking a risk. To walk was out of the question. That would only have served to emphasize in the most obtrusive

fashion my craving to see her—which would have been a tactical blunder. There was nothing to do but to send Antonio again.

I was not greatly surprised when he returned once more without having accomplished his object.

In the end Clarissa left our little village without my having been able to see her. Antonio brought me the news, not without gloating a little. "Well, that was the old efficient Antonio," I could not help saying.

I rarely criticized Antonio, and even when I did it was futile. He would put on the aggrieved face I knew from the boat. This time, however, it was different.

"If I had really wanted it," he said, "the meeting between you and Madame Clarissa would have taken place. But I think it is better this way." He was muttering in his close-mouthed manner, looking away from my face.

"What's that?" I asked. I thought I might have misunderstood his unwieldy French.

"I think that it is better this way," he repeated, and this time he looked me straight in the eye.

Neither his look nor his voice expressed impudence. What he said sounded rather like a gentle admonition, an objective, serious statement of fact. I felt an overpowering impulse to throw him out of the house. Yet at the same time I felt the need to justify myself. I was tempted to ask him just why he thought it was better this way. But I dared only to ask an indirect question: "Do you know Madame Clarissa from former days?"

"No," Antonio replied without hesitation.

"Do you know anything about her?" I continued.

"No," said Antonio.

I paused for a moment, and then I was foolhardy enough to remark scornfully: "Well, in that case you have probably bridged a gulf."

"On the contrary," Antonio replied, impassive and unmoved. "But I have been watching her."

I maintained silence. It was quite absurd, of course, to assume that Antonio could read a person's character and

history in his eyes. Still, his calm way of speaking somehow affected me.

About two months later I received a letter from Clarissa. She reproached me for not having communicated with her. She was now in Paris, she wrote, and she inquired when I would come to see her. But my desire had abated—I was absorbed in writing a new novel. I was unable to banish Antonio's curious statement from my mind. My reply was friendly and noncommittal.

During the winter months I heard about Clarissa from a friend of mine, Professor Robert L., an amiable enthusiast always inclined to let his imagination run away with him. He wrote in rapture about Clarissa.

It was a time filled with political tension, and Robert L., like myself, was a citizen of a country where the enemies of liberty and the partisans of brute force had usurped all power. They were people who shrank from nothing and who hated their opponents with deadly fanaticism. Robert L. was a quiet, harmless man, but he was not given to caution, and he had never made a secret of his liberal ideas. Thus he was an object of bitter hatred. Nevertheless I was painfully surprised when I read that Robert had been arrested on a charge of subversive activities. He was anything but a radical, and it was incredible that he, as the papers had it, had engaged in treasonable activities. Yet his enemies declared triumphantly that documents found in his house proved his guilt beyond the shadow of a doubt.

I made inquiries as to the truth of the whole matter. A trustworthy mutual friend informed me that the evidence that was Robert's undoing had been planted in his house by Clarissa.

As it turned out later, this was the third time Clarissa had been involved in a case of this kind.

THE DEATH OF NERO

THE news that his Governor in France had mutinied and proclaimed his deposition reached Emperor Nero on the 19th March in Naples, where he was acting the part of Oedipus with artistry, devotion, and success. To his friends he said that the revolt in France was just the thing he had been looking for; now he had a valid pretext for falling back upon the customs of war and plundering the rich province. The treasures would fill his depleted exchequer. Later in the day, he went to the circus and watched with interest the final contests of the heavyweight athletes. Alarming dispatches from France continued to arrive during the evening meal. The Emperor glanced them over, tore them up languidly, and shook his head over his Governor, who had obviously gone insane.

Nero let a whole week pass without taking action. When Hel, the Chief of his Cabinet, guardedly tried to suggest that it might be advisable to issue an order of the day to the western armies or to the troops assembled for the great Oriental campaign, or at least to send a message to the Senate, the Emperor declared that he intended to appear again on the boards in ten days, and did not feel like wasting his breath and his voice on so inane a matter as the crazy revolt in France. His ministers had much trouble in inducing him to set a price of ten millions on the insurgent Governor's head and to send a personally written letter to the Senate. He himself, so he told the Senate, was prevented by a throat affliction from going to Rome and therefore had to ask the Appointed Fathers to see that justice be done him and the State.

But the dispatches from the west became ever more alarming, and so the Emperor, sighing over the interruption of a sojourn devoted to art, finally had to decide to return to Rome. Pointing out his hoarseness and the soreness of

his throat, he even now refrained from appearing before the Senate, and contented himself with asking the most important members of that body to visit him at the Palatine. But when they hurriedly responded to the summons, he did not discuss politics with them, but spoke at great length of the improvements which Ktetib, the great organ builder from Alexandria, had at his own suggestion embodied in his water organs. Some time soon, he promised, he would personally introduce some of these new instruments to the public. "Provided that my Governor in France permits it," he added with a smile, and that was all he had to say about the situation.

On 16th April the news came that General Galba, the Governor of Spain, had declared his solidarity with his mutinous colleague in France and had been proclaimed Emperor by the western armies. Nero had asked the leading men of Rome to a banquet on the 17th April. He used the occasion for the performance of a witty little ballad to the tune of an obscene song, satirizing the two mutinous generals. He was pleased when he was told a few days later that the whole city was singing the ballad.

Emperor Nero was thirty years old at the time. He had shown that he could act forcefully if the occasion demanded it. But he displayed a strangely nonchalant attitude in dealing with the constantly spreading revolt in the west. Perhaps it was because he felt all too secure, because he was too firmly convinced that his luck would hold.

His Military Cabinet directed that a part of the troops assembled for the Oriental enterprise be sent to Northern Italy where a new army was to be formed. But these defensive measures lacked the proper *élan*. The ministers and generals were handicapped by the Emperor's indolence. He was satisfied with signing the documents presented to him, but nothing could induce him to take over the command of the new army and to lead it against the revolutionaries. When his advisers proposed that he do so he replied that it would be better if he joined the western army alone and unarmed and, in a brilliant speech, recalled

them to the old obedience. "Words are stronger than arms," he repeated several times.

He preferred to spend his time with frivolous and romantically extravagant projects; such as the suggestion that the whole Senate, yes, even the whole untrustworthy population of the city of Rome, be executed, or at least all inhabitants of French origin. Then again, the Senate becoming more difficult every day, he was inclined to compromise, offered to abdicate and be satisfied with ruling Egypt. If the Egyptians were to disavow him, he would live on what he earned by his histrionic art.

The population of Rome opposed with passive resistance the mobilization ordered by the commanders of the newly formed army. The collection of war taxes, too, lagged. The flow of supplies from the west ceased, Egypt and Libya detained their grain ships, the prices of victuals rose. Disturbances broke out when an Egyptian ship brought, instead of the expected wheat, merely Nile sand for the wrestling bouts in the Imperial arena. True, the masses were still partial to their wasteful and brilliant Emperor, the last descendant of the great Caesar, but the old Republican nobility, the bureaucracy, and the Roman-chauvinistic great landowners of Italy found fault with his cosmopolitan policies which smacked of liberalism and favoured the east. His opponents continued to gain adherents and became more daring every day. The Emperor's statues were hung with insulting placards. Nightly brawls were organized and, alluding to the name of General Vindex, who had started the revolt—*vindex* meaning judge—the whole city resounded with the cry: "Bring on the judge! Bring on *vindex*!"

The Emperor had always insisted that the administrative officers and the police submit to him unvarnished reports, and so he was promptly informed of what was now taking place. He listened to everything, but only rarely did he make any comment and, if so, in an offhand, contemptuous manner.

Dully menacing, the revolt was in the meantime coming

closer, although the city itself was kept in check by the presence of the twelve thousand Lifeguards. This well-paid and pampered *élite* troop was considered to be particularly devoted to the Emperor, and rightly so. The army, too, which was being assembled in Northern Italy, was composed of reliable troops. But the soldiers expected Nero to appear in person, to address them and manifest his interest in them. He refused to do so and this strange passivity was of advantage to his adversaries. Their emissaries were clever, the commanders of the contingents faithful to Nero lost authority because of the Emperor's failure to back them up personally, and so, on 8th June, news came to Rome that large numbers of the newly formed North-Italian army, too, had gone over to the mutineers and sworn allegiance to Galba, the Pretender.

Nero was at table when the dispatch reached him. He tore it to bits and overturned the table, smashing his two favourite goblets, the Homeric ones, into which artistic gold reliefs depicting scenes from the Odyssey had been etched. Wrathful, he bade his guests be off. After a brief seclusion, he sent for Locusta, a woman who was carried on the lists of the Imperial household as a housekeeper, but whose actual functions were somewhat of a puzzle to everybody, and demanded poison from her. She handed him the drops in a golden phial, but that was not good enough for him, and a more tasteful container had to be found.

However, a few hours later, the Emperor was full of confidence again. Were not the Lifeguard regiments still his staunch supporters? He summoned their leaders and proposed to them to put the fleet in Ostia in readiness, to embark the guards, and make for Egypt. With the faithful and dependable eastern provinces as a base, it ought not to be difficult to regain the Empire. They listened to him with the prescribed reverence, then looked at one another. Hesitating, they voiced their objections—weighty objections. Ought the capital really to be abandoned without a fight? Would it not be difficult, if not altogether impossible, to transport the troops from the city of Rome, to which they

clung, to the dubious east? Would not the soldiers be amazed if the Emperor were to abandon the capital instead of dying for it, if necessity required it? One of the officers cynically quoted one of Virgil's verses which Nero loved to recite with particular pathos: "Is it indeed such a misfortune to die?" The Emperor looked at the men with surprise, smiled distractedly, and shook his head at so much faint-heartedness. He had never liked to deal with officers.

Half an hour later, the leaders of the guards requested another audience. The growing unrest in the city, they suggested to the Emperor, required the reinforcement of his Lifeguards. But if the guards round the Palatine were reinforced, people might ask questions. Thus it was expedient that the Emperor repair to the Servilian Gardens which could be guarded much more easily and unobtrusively. The Servilian Gardens contained a number of court attendants' dwellings and work buildings of the royal household.

The officers expected a fit of rage from the Emperor. But nothing of the kind happened. Instead, an expression of childlike astonishment made Nero's fleshy face look almost silly. "I always thought," he said, "that I could sleep easily on the Palatine even without guards. But, after all, this is a military question, and I yield to expert opinion." Smiling, he gave instructions to move to the Gardens. Hurried preparations were made, and hardly an hour later the Emperor was on his way, accompanied by a detachment of Lifeguards. Men were posted at all the entrances to the extensive grounds.

Still, the Emperor could not believe that his rule was seriously threatened, to say nothing of his life. He shut himself up for two hours and wrote the outline of a speech which he meant to deliver in the Forum, to vindicate his rule before the Romans. This done, he gathered his friends about him—surprised to notice that not all whom he had summoned had followed him to the Servilian Gardens—and read them his speech. His project did not seem to arouse much enthusiasm. Nero ignored this and asked the men, standing about bewildered and embarrassed, what he had

better wear on the following day in the Forum to deliver his speech. At last, Phaon, his secretary, mustered up enough courage to say in a matter-of-fact tone that Nero would not get so far even as the beginning of his speech because the people would have torn him limb from limb before.

"Do you think so, my Phaon? Do you really think so?" the Emperor asked, nonplussed. Everybody now started to speak all at once, and it was obvious that, without exception, they considered his plan impracticable. Plainly irritated, Nero asked: "Well, if I am not to do that, what else is there left for me to do? Should I address myself directly to General Galba, the leader of the rebels, put myself into his hands, and appeal to his conscience? Or should I perhaps go to the Parthians and beg for asylum?" The Parthians were the Romans' mortal enemies, and Nero, after a mildly successful military campaign, had succeeded in coming to a tolerable understanding with them.

The Emperor spent the evening as was his wont. He had himself shaved, took the digestive which his court physician had prescribed for him, and sat down to supper. Contrary to his habit, he ate sparingly, but seemed to be in good spirits. He spoke much and wittily, mostly about literature, the theatre, handicrafts. He rose from table early and went to bed, declaring that he wished to have a clear head for whatever needed to be done the next day.

But his sleep was troubled. He got up an hour before midnight, meaning to follow an occasional habit and engage some of the numerous guards in affable and informative conversation. But to his surprise there was no guard at the entrance, and the next guard, too, was gone. He walked toward the pavilion occupied by Phaon. The man, it appeared, had been looking for him. He had had news to the effect that, after the Emperor had left the Palatine, the officers of the guards called their men together and told them that the Emperor had left Rome secretly and fled to Egypt; furthermore, that Galba, the new master, had pledged himself to make a present of thirty thousand sesterces to every member of the guards after his entry

into Rome. Thereupon the troops had taken the oath of allegiance to the new master.

It was outdoors that Phaon informed Nero of these things, in the night from the eighth to the ninth of June. The night was unusually warm, but the Emperor seemed to feel cold. He stood there, a man of medium height, looking rather stout and clumsy in his dressing-gown, and wearing sandals on his bare feet. It seemed to Phaon that the Emperor's heavy face blanched and that he pressed his prominent lower lip between his teeth. But all he said was: "Why, that's nonsense. He'll never be able to pay them thirty thousand, and I don't see how they can take such a promise seriously."

Illusory though his ideas were at times, in this instance he did believe, he believed in man's common sense. He himself was quite open-handed. His guards' pay and gratuities were exceptionally high, so high, in fact, that they represented the limit. He had therefore assumed that the troops would not be taken in by empty promises of higher gratuities, and he had relied upon them. So it was fundamentally his belief in man's common sense by which he perished; for, continuing on his round of inspection, he found that the men had after all been taken in by a lot of silly promises. At any rate, all the guards had quietly and secretly left their posts. This startled him, although he did not give himself away before Phaon. For the first time he had a foreboding of how near his end was.

Nero dismissed Phaon and, dragging his feet, pursued his solitary way through the spacious park, from one of the small courtiers' houses to the other. He meant to call together his court. But all doors were locked, and no response came. He went back to his bedroom, and now his chamberlains and lackeys, too, had run off, having taken along whatever there was to be taken, even the little gold receptacle with the poison. This so infuriated him that his accustomed words failed him, the pathetic and the coarsely blasphemous ones, and he only compressed his lips tightly.

Within the next half-hour the few remaining faithful

ones arrived: the three freedmen, Phaon, Telos, and Epaphroditos, and his handsome young friend and bedfellow, the sixteen-year-old Sporus. Nero sat on his bed, silent, bitter, and sulking. The rascals had carried off even the pillowcases. He squatted there, flabby and stoutish, his legs protruding remarkably slender from under his short, violet dressing-gown, his reddish-blond hair, matted by perspiration, falling down over his forehead, the skin of his square and not unattractive face spotty, and his near-sighted grey eyes under knitted brows staring darkly in front of him; and his friends did not know whether he was even aware of their presence.

At last he lifted his eyes. "Send for Edico, please," he said. This Edico, a German, one of the Lifeguards who used to be about his person constantly, was his favourite among them.

"What does Your Majesty want of Edico?" Telos asked guardedly and very politely.

"I think," Nero replied, "that no one can be of better assistance to me than he, when I die. I should like to die decently." Saying this, he steadily, almost cheerfully, looked from one of the four men to the other.

"Edico is not here," Phaon said finally, "everybody has gone except us."

Again Nero shook his head. "Strange, how faint-hearted they are," he pondered.

"It would be best," Phaon suggested after a little while, "if Your Majesty were to go to my villa."

"Hm, yes," Nero mumbled, "perhaps you're right." He rose sluggishly. "It's rather far," he grumbled.

"About eight kilometres," said Phaon.

The lad Sporus said eagerly: "They've left some horses in the stable."

At the sound of his favourite's clear voice the Emperor's face brightened. "This is the first time you've shown an interest in horses," he smiled.

The sky had become overcast, it looked as if a thunderstorm were brewing. Nero came upon an old cloak which

one of the servants had probably discarded, exchanging it against a better garment from the Emperor's wardrobe. They proceeded toward the stables. Nero mounted. Sporus handed up the cloak. It was so large that even the head could be comfortably enwrapped. The disguise began to amuse the Emperor. "Is this all right?" he asked, draping himself.

"It looks fine," Phaon criticized dryly, "but the moon will be out again presently, and then everybody will recognize you. Your Majesty would do well to cover your head entirely."

But Nero merely said: "Let's go!" and put his horse to a trot.

They passed the Lifeguards' great central barrack. It was lighted and full of noise. Preparations were presumably made for marching to meet Galba, seizing Nero, and occupying the city. The Emperor and his little escort rode on swiftly. Two men came walking in their direction.

"Some more," one of them said, "who are looking for Nero."

Presently, they met two soldiers of the guards. After a moment's hesitation, they gave the salute to which the Emperor alone was entitled. "Now we're in for it," Phaon grumbled softly.

After crossing the Anio River, they rode on silently through the countryside, sparsely dotted with villas. Undulating low hills in the distance, grassland and underbrush as far as the eye could reach, wild rabbits scurrying to safety before the horses' hooves. At last, a narrow path leading to Phaon's property branched off from the main highway. Not wishing to apprise the servants of their arrival, they left the horses behind. To reach the rear of the house, they had to toil through brushwood, thorny brambles, and reeds. At times, the others spread their cloaks over the brambles to facilitate the Emperor's progress; at others, they had to creep along on all fours.

At last the rear wall of the house rose before them. Phaon asked the Emperor to wait until he had ascertained

how best to smuggle him into the house and find him a safe spot. He took the others along, leaving Nero behind, alone in the night. He squatted on the ground and clumsily removed the thorns sticking to his clothes. There came a few strong puffs of warm wind, the night was full of unrest, dogs barked, birds screamed before the gathering storm. There he squatted, thoughtful, shaking his head several times with astonishment. He felt thirsty, but there was nothing but a puddle of unclean tepid water. He scooped, drank, and spat the water out with disgust. Softly he said to himself: "That's Nero's Drink now." What was known as "Nero's Drink" was a mixture of seven different kinds of wine of various vintages. This mixture had been given his name and was to be known by it for a long time to come. Then he relieved nature soberly and meditatively, wondering if that was perhaps the last time.

The others returned. An unused door, opening into the rear of the house, had been cleared by them sufficiently to permit a person to crawl through on all fours. So, puffing and grumbling, Nero crawled inside. He got into a small cellar-like room filled with dampish air. Feebly the moon shed in its beams, and the men did not dare to light up. There lay the Emperor on two shabby blankets, rather exhausted. He had not eaten much at supper, and now, after so arduous a trip, he suffered from hunger and thirst. Phaon went in search of food and brought him some dried tuna fish and a little of the sour local wine. Nero ate and drank, taking the first bites and swallows with greed and relish, the following ones with disgust. Then he reclined and closed his eyes.

"Have you news from Rome, my Phaon?" he asked after a while.

"Yes," said Phaon, "I have news."

"What is it?" asked Nero.

"The Senate has decided," the secretary replied, "to pronounce you an enemy of the people to-morrow immediately after sunrise and to put you to death in the ancient manner."

"What is that: 'the ancient manner'?" the Emperor asked attentively.

"The criminal," Phaon replied, "is stripped and bound with cords, his neck is put inside a wooden fork, and then he is scourged until he is dead."

"The Senate is quite brave," Nero said, contempt making him project his prominent lower lip still farther, "since I am no longer to be feared."

"It would at any rate be well," Epaphroditos suggested, "not to give them a chance to carry out the sentence."

Strangely listless, Nero blinked at him through the darkness with his short-sighted eyes. "You mean," he stated, "that it is now for me to die decently." The others were silent. "You may be right," he continued, adding in a casual tone: "Dig me a grave, so they will not find me and mutilate my body. Put me in it until there is an opportunity for cremating me in a befitting manner." While, hesitating, they turned to leave, he touched his fingers to his cloak and clothing, which were dirty. "Another thing," he detained them. "A man cannot die in such clothes," he said disgustedly. "At least get me some decent clothes. And a wreath to die with." And when they still waited, he jumped up unexpectedly, stamped his foot, and cried fiercely: "Get you gone!"

Startled by his uncontrolled shouting, they slunk out hurriedly. The lad Sporus was about to join them, but Nero called him back and made him sit down at his side. Pouting like a boy who wishes to apologize, the Emperor said: "Well, am I not right? A wreath and some decent clothes, that's the least I can ask, isn't it?"

He pulled out the little dagger which he habitually carried about with him, tested its point and edge by mechanically brushing his hand over it, and put it back again. "I am glad," he said, "that I remembered to get shaved last night. Come now, my Sporus, and arrange my forelocks for me." He squatted on the ground, rather stout, his hands clasped around his knees. His strong fleshy face, with the straight prominent nose and the mightily pro-

truding lower lip, bore an expression of calmness, and of no fear whatever. And while his favourite's tender hands busied themselves with his soft long reddish-blond hair, he prattled and meditated: "It isn't easy to be a good emperor, like Caesar or Augustus. Even to be a good actor, like Roscius or Liban, isn't easy. But to be a great emperor and at the same time a great actor, that's damned difficult.

"Strictly speaking, whatever I did was to the good. True, there isn't any money, and I'd like to know what that scoundrelly Galba is going to do about the thirty thousand he promised to everyone of my guard"—he shook his head, still astonished—"but that on which I spent the money was good. If the world's historians are just, they will have to come to the conclusion: Where Alexander failed, Nero was successful. Nero has in truth spread Greek culture all over the world. But the world's historians are probably not just, and they will pause only at what I am supposed to have done badly.

"Now I shall have to cap a great life by a great death. Seneca set me a rather good example there. He died in a decent manner. As a matter of fact, he ought to have been thankful to me for having given him the opportunity of a decent death. Better by far than if he had died a commonplace death in his bed. How about it, my Sporus, don't you want to precede me in death?" He paid no attention to the lad's startled recoil. "I am sure," he continued, "that those whom I had killed no longer blame me for it, now that they are with those below. There were rather many whom I had killed, a great many, but I had good reasons for it. Now that they are dead, they themselves will understand it, and when I step down to join them, they will salute me reverentially and amicably. Don't you think so, my Sporus?" But the lad Sporus had cleared out.

Nero, blinking his short-sighted eyes, peered into the corners, did not see the boy, rose clumsily, and groped about the room. Rage seized him at finding himself alone. "Where are you, you swine, you scum?" he shouted, he bawled coarsely. "I'll have you whipped, I'll have you

crucified, you traitor, you swine." He felt shaken by self-pity and a mad desire to touch human skin. They had all forsaken him. There was no boy, no woman, for him to mingle with. Raging desire made him breathe violently. He sank his teeth into his full lips, wrathful at Sporus and his lady-friend Calvia, because they were not present, and at Poppaea, because she was dead.

He heard the others come back and at once pulled himself together. It was a matter of dying decently. Playing with the dagger, he begged: "Let me hear, Telos, how you will mourn me." And when Telos haltingly and painfully recited the customary verses of the lamentation for the dead, he corrected him several times.

Horsemen could now be heard approaching. There must be a whole squadron of them, surrounding the house. "If they once succeed in forcing their way in here, Your Majesty," Phaon warned, "it will be too late."

The Emperor replied haughtily: "You might have saved yourself the warning." Unhurried, with the aid of the others, he put on the garment they had brought him. They had managed even to procure a wreath. It was scrubby and shabby, but it was a wreath at any rate.

Nero seated himself properly. "Hold my shoulders, Phaon," he commanded, "and let me slide down slowly when it's over." He bade Epaphroditos firmly grasp the wrist of his hand holding the dagger. The two men did as they were told. Telos stood at the door to hold back intruders until the Emperor would have accomplished the deed.

Nero looked from one of his friends to the other, sighed deeply, and said: "What an artist the world is losing in me!" And, with Epaphroditos to guide his hand, he plunged the dagger into his throat.

MARIANNE IN INDIA

I

By the third week out from Portsmouth, the passengers on the *Duke of Grafton* had all sniffed at each other and made friends or the reverse; everybody knew everybody inside out. It was a long voyage to India when you had to sail round the Cape. It was reckoned nineteen weeks from Portsmouth to Madras, if all went well; but you might easily spend six months at sea. They were now off the west coast of Africa and it was damnably hot. The East India Company's ships were not of the most comfortable, and the *Duke of Grafton* was not the most comfortable of the company's ships. The lack of comfort was unpleasant and the heat still more unpleasant; but worst of all was the boredom.

Besides the ship's complement there were forty-one passengers on board. They were nearly all soldiers, most of whom were making their first voyage to India; then there were a few of the company's officials, and a chaplain. There were very few women: the wife of General Clavering, a Miss Pearce, the wife and daughter of the company's resident at Murshidabad, and a German lady, Mrs. Imhoff, who, with her four-year-old child, was accompanying her husband.

India was a gruelling place, for all its enticements. You had to be pretty desperate to go there, or else you had to be a very courageous man and very confident of your destiny. Many came back with riches and broken health, many with broken health only; and many came to an untimely end beneath its implacable sky. An unpleasant country, temperature one hundred degrees in January, and an incongruous population. Seventeen thousand whites

among seventy million natives. Everything was precarious, incalculable; from the moment you landed you never had firm ground under your feet. Certainly a military career there offered glamour and much more; opportunities of all kinds ran riot. Had not the thirty-year-old John Charles Maclean, brother of the Hugh Maclean on board, made forty thousand pounds in four years? Many a man would chance his liver for that.

There was no secret, then, as to what thirty-eight of the forty-one passengers on the *Duke of Grafton* were after. But what, in the name of heaven, was the German doing on the ship? This rather stout, grey-haired, gesticulating gentleman with a wife and child, who called himself Christoph Karl Adam, Baron Imhoff—though some doubt was felt about his title and the passenger list had him down as plain Mr. Imhoff. He had told some of the other passengers that he was a painter and was going to India in search of subjects, and above all in the hope of painting miniatures of Indian princes on ivory and porcelain, in the mode of the day. This adventurous notion was twice as hazardous for a man who had a wife and child on his hands; his glowing enthusiasm, rendered in fluent and faulty English, was listened to with coolness. There was no response to his persistent efforts to start a conversation, and the German couple was left severely to itself.

This does not mean that the other passengers did not take a burning interest in this strange pair. Mrs. Imhoff was a great deal younger than her husband. She looked about twenty-two and she had a clear and delicate complexion, blonde hair, a beautiful skin, grey eyes, and a low forehead. She was fond of laughing, and her teeth were small and charming. Altogether, in spite of her size and height and a certain sharpness of feature at close quarters, she made a graceful and appealing impression. Whenever this dubious Baroness promenaded the deck, the manner in which the men talked and held themselves underwent a change. They talked louder and more interestingly; every gesture and movement took on a new elegance. The ladies, on the other

hand, especially Mrs. Clavering, became as dumb as stones, as stiff as wood, whenever Mrs. Imhoff appeared.

There was no escape from perspiration and boredom beneath that relentless tropical sky. Three weeks on board ship is a long time, and it feels twice as long when some of the passengers form a highly sophisticated and mannered society among themselves from which you are rigidly excluded. Perhaps the German married couple suffered most from this and perhaps among all those on board they had the most dubious and difficult future before them; yet the Baron kept up his genial and ingenious efforts to make himself agreeable and the Baroness held firmly to her bright and becoming smile. She was unaffected even by the constant worry over her child. Except for the rats, this four-year-old boy was certainly the liveliest creature on the ship.

With unruffled good humour his mother reproved, begged, consoled, while the little brat ran from one end of the boat to the other, playing with dog or bird, asking the Captain unintelligible questions in German, screaming, whooping, interrupting the sailors at their work, vanishing completely three or four times a week under sails or in the hold, forever in danger of his life, crawling about and getting between people's legs. "Karl! *Karl!*" Mrs. Imhoff's ringing voice was to be heard all day long, and the passengers explained to each other that Karl meant Charles.

One day, bowling his hoop with more determination than skill, this boy Karl got in the way of Mrs. Clavering, who was pacing the deck clothed, in spite of the heat, in a splendid and voluminous dress. The hoop got caught in her train. The stout little fellow charged after it and, gripping hold of her as he fell, tore her skirt in two. The General's wife gathered her torn dress together and, with an extremely sour look on her large face, went on without a word. Mrs. Imhoff ran after her and, blushing deeply, addressed her most earnestly in a mixture of German and English, turning now and again to the boy to insist apparently on his apologizing to the lady. But the child stood, chubby-faced

and stolid, staring straight in front of him with his round eyes.

The General's wife replied frigidly: "I don't understand you," and very expressively raised her shoulders and let them fall again. Then, with head high and eyes front, she walked on.

Mrs. Imhoff lost her blithe, gay look. Her back bent; her face quivered and flushed; sharp lines showed around her eyes. She had suddenly become a tired, anxious woman.

Just as she turned away, holding the pouting, refractory boy by the hand, a small man in a coffee-coloured coat came up to her. He had a long face, a long nose, large eyes beneath a wide forehead, a strong chin; and his clothes, in spite of the heat, were faultlessly pressed and closely buttoned up. Speaking slowly and courteously, he said: "It must be hard making such a long journey with a child, even when the child is so charming and the mother so patient."

Mrs. Imhoff looked at the gentleman in the coffee-coloured coat and dimly remembered the Baron telling her that the little man who was so reserved was a very important person, but that no one could get near him. She smiled once more; she looked girlish and appealing. "Oh—sir," she said in broken English, "it is the opposite. It is beautiful—it is sweet," she added, correcting herself, "to have a child with, and it is dreadful—without."

The gentleman in the coffee-coloured coat listened with attention and assured her once more very slowly and in simple words, so that she could understand him, that her boy was charming. He was probably the only person on board except the child's mother who was of this opinion. Mrs. Imhoff made an impulsive reply and begged him to excuse her terrible English. On the contrary he found her English wonderful. The Baroness was taller than he, and her bright and lively manner contrasted with his gravity. The women looked on with disgust at the colloquy and the men with eager interest. The Baron came up. The three seemed to be the only ones on board whose spirits rose

above the tedium and the heat. Later, they sat together at luncheon. Karl sprinkled the coffee-coloured coat with broth and the owner of it was delighted.

After luncheon the passengers withdrew to their cabins, and the Baron then told his spouse who and what the gentleman in the coffee-coloured coat was. He was a certain Mr. Warren Hastings. The Baroness had never before heard the name Warren, and she tried hard to say it properly in her ringing Swabian speech. The Baron went on to explain that this Mr. Warren Hastings was going as second in council to Madras. And, as the Governor of Madras, Mr. Du Pré, was old and no more than a figurehead, Mr. Hastings would in fact govern the Presidency.

What was the Presidency of Madras? the Baroness asked with a yawn; for now she was beginning to give way blissfully to the heat and her fatigue. Was it as large as the Duchy of Württemberg? She came from Stuttgart and, until she set out on this long voyage, the only other place she had known was Nuremberg, where the Baron had been living for some years. Yes, the Presidency had a population of, maybe, twenty million; Württemberg eight hundred thousand. And so this little coffee-coloured gentleman might be considered more powerful than Duke Karl Eugen, the Baroness said, and she had to laugh. Yes, Karl Adam assured her seriously; and he began, not for the first time, to paint in glowing colours all the marvels of the Indian scene—that immense and teeming country with its curious, highly civilized population, so babyishly weak that any man of brains and determination could overthrow it with his little finger. Lord Clive had shown that nine hundred Englishmen were a match for fifty thousand of the natives. A funny lot, these natives. For all their cowardice they could sometimes be really dangerous; particularly where their gods and sacred animals were concerned. They gave way, bent before the storm, could not be cornered; perjured themselves time after time for a triviality and wondered that you wondered at it; died resolutely and without a word for things as trivial.

Herr von Imhoff romanced about the storied treasures, the jungle, the temples, the Rajahs on thrones of gold and ivory, the holy men endowed with hypnotic powers, the temple dancing-girls, the seething masses whom any white man could make his slaves. He spoke of the immense possibilities open to any intelligent man there, now that the European constellation had risen, bringing war and the rivalries of Dutch and English and French interests. It was only necessary, perhaps, as the champion of one of the native princes, to play off the European forces one against the other. Herr von Imhoff went on to dream of how he would win the favour of one of the native potentates with his miniature painting, make himself indispensable, and then, after cutting himself a good slice out of the giant Indian cake, return laden with riches to Europe.

Marianne listened in silence, her lowered eyelids a delicate blue, fringed with long light brown lashes. She loved her husband and loved to hear him talk; he was so romantic and adventurous. Life in Stuttgart had been tedious and restricted. She was only Anna Maria Apollonia Chapuset, third daughter of a poor French *émigré* family which clung to the outer edge of the pompous court of Württemberg, vainly defying a scarcely dissembled contempt. So when the Franconian Baron appeared, a much-travelled man of the world, and made ardent love to this tall and soft and inexperienced Marianne Chapuset, it is not surprising that his gallantry seemed the answer to her dreams. She made no resistance whatever and wondered that her dream could be fulfilled with such magnificent ease.

In an interview, painful from every aspect, her father and brother compelled the rather elderly and threadbare Baron to marry Marianne. Karl Adam von Imhoff had seen life, and his travels in Turkey had given him a fatalistic turn. Why not? he asked himself and married her. Her mother, Susanne Chapuset, was the only person to object. Baron Imhoff did not please her at all; a windbag, an adventurer, penniless. "This is no *Selzhäfele* you've got

into," she said sadly as Marianne got into the coach with her husband. Now a *Selzhäfele* was a bowl of the raspberry fool which was so delicious a speciality of the country.

In spite of Madame Chapuset's apprehension the marriage did not turn out so badly. They went to Nuremberg, where their first child died; this was perhaps fortunate. Later, they availed themselves, not quite irreproachably, of an opportunity of getting credit. Marianne knew nothing of business and debts did not trouble her. When matters came to a head and the Baron proposed the Indian adventure, she felt no compunction about bringing off a final *coup* on her own account, and lifted a final and very considerable sum from their injured and thick-headed creditors. And now they were on the *Duke of Grafton* with a healthy child, rich in hope but short of money.

The gentleman of the coffee-coloured coat and the difficult name was also reclining on his bunk in the heat of his cabin. He had had sixteen years of India; he was used to its trying climate, its difficult situations, its gruelling experiences of every kind. He was used to making rapid decisions when the fortunes of war hung upon them, and to conducting complicated diplomatic negotiations with unintelligible natives. He was used to defending measures which were as obvious in Madras or Calcutta as they were incomprehensible in the office of the East India Company in Leadenhall Street, and to fighting London in London's interests. He was used to resolving the dilemma: money *or* humanity, when London wanted money *and* humanity. He was used to sampling wares, organizing transport on a huge scale, erecting warehouses which were at the same time forts, dodging the vicissitudes of wars at sea which were never far from piracy, pulling off commercial deals in which there was a spice of foreign policy. He enjoyed—in that intolerable climate—jumbling up politics, strategy, native psychology, English civilization, Indian culture, in such a fashion as to produce a big dividend for Leadenhall Street. In his leisure he read the Latin classics, wrote verse, went in for sport, and learnt the languages of the country.

The only thing he winced at was having nothing to do. On board the ship there was nothing to do but read the classics and play chess with Major Archibald Callender. This was more than he could endure.

He could not sleep. Lying in his hot cabin, he reflected that with the best of luck it would be sixteen weeks before he reached Madras. He reflected on the debts he had had to contract in order to go on paying the generous annuities which during his stay in England he had settled on his numerous poor relations. He thought of Daylesford, to which he had paid another visit—the old family property which had been sold three generations ago. Would ten years' labour in Madras and Bengal be too high a price to pay for the recovery of Daylesford? He thought not—and a smile lengthened his long lips.

In the cool of the evening he encountered the German lady on deck. He really did like that boy, but he was not sorry that Baroness Imhoff had put him to bed. Mr. Hastings again wore a coffee-coloured coat, but it was a different one. The Baroness too had changed her dress: she was in a flutter of light scarves, veils, and lace; her blonde hair, fastened with dainty ribbons, towered high. Hastings talked to her about Madras and Bengal. But not at all as Herr von Imhoff had. He spoke in figures—of tariffs and taxes and administrative measures. The Baroness listened, smiling politely, and then, glancing off these hard facts, became sentimental, as the mode enjoyed. It was evident, however, that they couldn't advance far into this realm without the aid of a common language. The gentleman in brown looked attentively at her long coral lips, misunderstood if he understood at all, and both, while they lost themselves in a discussion of the influences on the soul of the tropical sky, could not help laughing often and heartily over the little either could understand of what the other said.

All the other thirty-nine passengers, also the captain and the crew and the white and coloured servants and stewards, looked on with interest at this conversation. Mrs. Clavering

remarked, first to herself and later to the others, that it was now evident in which of this married couple the taint resided. Though before she had given Mr. Imhoff the cold shoulder, she now actively took pity on a man so grossly slighted by his wife.

Mr. Hastings was used to conducting conversations in the way he wished them to go. Nothing could turn him from his goal even in those extremely tricky interviews with natives when the most crooked and flowery path was the shortest. In this conversation it was Mrs. Imhoff who took the lead. Mr. Hastings was content patiently to correct the Baroness's mistakes. She laughed, corrected herself, imprinted the correction on her memory, and the next instant made the same mistake again. Whatever she said Mr. Hastings found both sensible and enchanting.

At dinner the Baron gave the second in council at Madras his views about India. The Baron was a man of imagination, of original ideas, of unique experiences, with an eye for colour, a feeling for poetry. Mr. Hastings took to him. He delighted in poetry himself. He was employed on a translation of a short Veda. Even on his busiest days he devoted at least twenty minutes to the Muses. But he made a sharp distinction between literature and business, and his reverence for Indian and Persian poetry did not prevent him from taking a very clear view of the company's interests when it came to dealing with Hindus and Mohammedans. As the conversation was conducted in English, Marianne was not able to follow it very well, but she threw in a banal remark here and there with arch intent.

Later, from his bunk, the Baron explained to his wife that this Mr. Hastings owed his success to the fact that he was no philosopher. The man who made long debate of the why and wherefore could never bring off a deal with real success. This Mr. Hastings would in all probability make himself undisputed master of India, precisely because he never asked himself to what end he did it. He, Karl Adam, was of course very much more gifted than this gentleman of the coffee-coloured coat. But unfortunately he was a

philosopher, in a sense a poet. Therefore he had to confine himself to understanding and explaining the pie while Coffee-Colour ate it.

Marianne fell asleep very contentedly while Karl Adam was explaining this. She had a tremendous respect for her husband and his philosophy; but she did not need to be put right about the small and serious little man in the coffee-coloured coat. She liked him because she felt she was his superior. Her romantic Baron was her superior, and therefore she *loved* him.

There was a tiresome little incident the following morning. Their little boy made a mess of their cabin. The Baroness, who insisted on cleanliness, ordered the stewardess to clean it up. Scarcely had this been done when Karl repeated the offence. The girl, when summoned again, made a face. The Baroness asked Karl Adam to give the person a tip. Karl Adam declared that it was quite beyond his power. Though he was not wedded to money for money's sake, the fifteen louis-d'or he still possessed were earmarked for their stay in India. They would last at longest a week, and he had made a stern resolve not to break into them. The girl stood there during this discussion without stirring a finger. She certainly did not understand the German, but she no doubt understood its meaning. When nothing came of it, she left the cabin without having carried out the Baroness's order. Marianne wondered whether to make a complaint and decided that it would be better to beg the girl to do what she asked after mollifying her with the gift of a small brooch.

The Baron now dressed for dinner with unusual magnificence—with much greater magnificence than the second member of the Madras Council, who continued as before to ring the changes on his two coffee-coloured coats. But Imhoff's satin coat was a little the worse for wear and his peruke was in need of renovation; and the contrast between him and the severe Mr. Hastings was by no means to his advantage. Marianne was voluble in German; when she spoke in English she made the same mistakes as she had

the first day. She observed that the correct Mr. Hastings found her Swabian prattle just as entrancing as her faulty English. She loved her husband and decided to be Mrs. Hastings.

Mrs. Clavering now spent a great deal of time with Baron Imhoff. If Marianne joined them, Mrs. Clavering became as wood; she did not open her mouth and quickly excused herself. Marianne decided to become Mrs. Hastings and to take precedence of the General's wife.

Three days later Warren Hastings fell sick. The Reverend A. Salmon, though he had studied medicine, could not diagnose the disorder. He prescribed—as a shot in the air—a febrifuge. But what his patient was suffering from was having nothing to do; for he never felt well except under pressure of incessant work.

Marianne Imhoff sat in his hot and ill-ventilated cabin nursing his illness. She gazed at his long nose, which projected abruptly from his forehead and seemed twice as long as ever on his emaciated face. She gazed at his strong chin, his commanding forehead, whose lofty expanse was the higher because at thirty-seven his hair was beginning to recede. She hung on every word that issued from his thin dry lips, and understood nearly all he said. She understood that he talked of power, of military operations, and knew that here and there he quoted Latin. She had often heard Latin in Stuttgart and could not help laughing at the English pronunciation—and the sick man, who clearly did not know she was there, laughed too.

This proved to Marianne Imhoff, who loved her husband Karl Adam, that she and this man Hastings with the difficult first name could live happily together, and she made up her mind, come what might, to nurse him back to health. In spite of the scandal she never left his cabin day or night from that day on.

As soon as Mr. Hastings began to recover and was for the first time clear in his mind, he asked for a looking-glass. He had often been in danger of his life; he had mastered desperate situations without a tremor; the admonition of

Horace—to keep a cool head in hard straits—was his device. But when he saw his unkempt and bearded face in the glass, he visibly quailed and, losing for once all control of his nerves, demanded the barber. Marianne did not understand what he said, but she guessed his meaning. With the swiftness of instinct she found his razor, made a lather, and prepared to shave him. He protested in alarm; for it was highly improper. But Marianne insisted and, after three-quarters of an hour, without inflicting more than five serious gashes, she restored his face to its former state.

Mr. Warren Hastings was aware during this proceeding of a deep and intimate sympathy, improper but exceedingly welcome, between this woman and himself. He resolved, with a determination equal to that of his resolve to complete and maintain the conquest of India, to have the marriage between her and Baron Imhoff, whom he liked very well, dissolved, and to make her Mrs. Hastings.

As soon as he was able to go on deck, he asked the Baron to paint a miniature of him. The other passengers thought it a little odd of the second in council at Madras to have his portrait painted by this obscure German. He sat first in his coffee-coloured coat and then in his wine-red frock coat. There was no denying, all the same, that despite his small stature he looked very imperious in his wine-red coat and large peruke, with his great forehead and the long nose jutting straight out from it, and his heavy eyebrows and forceful chin. Even the boy Karl was a good deal impressed.

During the sittings Mr. Hastings talked to Mr. Imhoff about German, English, and Indian Law, with particular reference to marriage. Mr. Hastings had won political, military, and commercial victories; but he had never been so pleased as when he learned that in the Franconian courts a divorce could be obtained on the ground of mutual dislike, or incompatibility of temperament.

Mr. Warren Hastings was now very quickly restored to health, for he had something to do. He stalked the fanciful, corpulent Baron with the patience he had learned in the long-drawn-out negotiations of the East. The Baron saw

him coming and knew that the battle was lost before it was even begun. He loved Marianne and he was impressed by Hastings. They both had more energy than he. He had too much imagination to be energetic; he saw too many roads to be able to keep to one. Pleasant though his marriage was, he was ready as a fatalist to shrug his shoulders and slip out of it just as he had slipped into it. Also—as a fatalist he did not shut his eyes to this side of the question—there were advantages. A clever man might help himself out of the open hand of this young Indian conqueror.

Herr von Imhoff, busy with his India ink and his brush, drove a hard bargain. There were long and flowery preludes before the two were able to lay their cards on the table without disguise. Then it was found that their views were really not diametrically opposed. Mr. Hastings was as generous in the matter of money as Mr. Imhoff in affairs of the feelings.

That very night the Baron came to an understanding with Marianne. At first he tried to be worldly, sceptical, cynical; but it did not come off very well. His plump face looked weary and old and Marianne loved him dearly. She tried to make a farce of the whole affair, and her little teeth gleamed as she laughed and laughed. But this attempt failed too. Finally she cried. It was only the second time during all the years they had lived together that Karl Adam had seen her cry; for she was an exception in that age of feeling and was not fond of tears. This time she cried until the whole pillow was wet. She tried to stifle her sobs in it, but the child woke up and became difficult and demanded lemonade and made a noise and there were complaints from the cabins on either side.

It was next decided that the Imhoffs should send their petition for divorce to the courts of law at Nuremberg from the next port the boat put in at, and then remain in Madras, or wherever else Mr. Hastings might be, until the German decree arrived. Mr. Hastings undertook to provide for their maintenance in a manner suitable to their rank, since under this new dispensation Mr. Imhoff was no longer

able to pursue his original scheme of making a fortune from his miniatures. When the divorce was accomplished, Mr. Imhoff was to return to Germany and Karl to remain with his mother.

Once all this had been arranged, the Imhoffs and Karl and Mr. Warren Hastings led a united family life for the remainder of the voyage. Herr von Imhoff was reconciled to his destiny. The other thirty-eight passengers were scarcely of the same way of thinking. Least of all Mrs. Clavering. She behaved as frigidly to Mr. Imhoff and Mr. Hastings as she had before to Mrs. Imhoff only.

II

It took six years, however, before the legal formalities were concluded. In those years Warren Hastings became Governor of Bengal and first Governor-General of British India. He completed the conquest of India. He filled the company's coffers. He broke the malicious and pig-headed opposition of those members of the council who had been sent from London to tie his hands. To this end he had an Indian Rajah hanged. For the same purpose he destroyed a brave race which he admired, to please a cowardly one which disgusted him. He made roads. Relieved famines. Was just and unjust, even as the River Ganges.

Marianne Imhoff was at his side and understood not a thing of all that went on. She kept house in Calcutta like a princess, dressed with elegance and luxury, spent lacs of rupees, allowed the princes and great personages of the country to make her presents which they wrathfully and with extreme devotion laid at her feet, laughed and made the most of her small teeth, felt herself the superior of Warren Hastings and liked him very much, spoke bad English and did nothing to improve it; and Hastings found everything about her wonderful. Her long neck grew scraggy, her features sharp, and her boy Karl became a lanky, noisy, unpleasant lout.

Just as Warren Hastings had by a series of bold and high-handed strokes broken the opposition of the three hostile members of the council, the decree of divorce arrived from the courts at Nuremberg, and he was able to make Mrs. Imhoff an honest woman. General Clavering was one of the three councillors whom he had defeated; and in view of the truce which had only just been patched up the General could scarcely refuse to attend the wedding. Two days before the ceremony the General conveniently fell sick. His wife excused herself on the ground that she had to nurse her husband. But Hastings, at Marianne's wish, made a personal call on the General on the day of the wedding, and politely but obstinately insisted that he and Lady Clavering should take part in the festivities.

Marianne's life had been almost uniformly happy. She was happy at Stuttgart when she lost her heart to the Baron; she was happy when she married him; she was happy when she put the baby Karl for the first time to her breast; she was happy when on board the boat the heart beneath the coffee-coloured coat warmed toward her. But the happiest day of her life was when she received the congratulations of the General's wooden wife.

General Clavering died three days after the Governor's wedding, possibly from overwork, possibly from the rancour that devoured his heart.

III

Marianne wrote to her mother, Susanne Chapuset, to tell her of her new marriage and enclosed a large cheque. The letter went from Calcutta to Plymouth and reached her mother's hands eighteen weeks after it was written. The self-important old lady was inclined to agree with the court circle of Stuttgart in looking down with disdain on the Governor of India. India—a sort of menagerie, a circus; its Governor—something between a shopkeeper and a tamer

of wild beasts. That kind of thing did not go down at Stuttgart. When, ten months after the dispatch of her letter, Marianne received her mother's answer, she read cordial wishes for her happiness, but also the sad comment that Marianne had not this time, either, put herself in the *Selzhäfele*. Now by *Selzhäfele* she meant those bowls of raspberry fool which were so delicious a speciality of Württemberg.

IV

Mr. Warren Hastings, seventy-two years of age, wearing, in defiance of the fashion, a plain coffee-coloured coat, was walking alone through the carefully tended gardens at Daylesford. It was a June morning and still very early. Daylesford House, white and peaceful and stately, looked across the wide park over a pretty lake. The servants were only just astir. The old gentleman observed with pleasure how well certain shrubs he had introduced from Bengal were coming on, though others—the lychee trees, for example, which he had with great trouble got from Madras—he was sorry to see were not likely to bear fruit here. He bent down to read the botanical name written neatly on a label attached to one of the trees: *Nephelium litchi*.

The sun rose slowly above the trees. He went into the breakfast-room. Three places were laid. His eye was caught by a squat bowl of grey earthenware of a sort not made in England. He smiled. The bowl was doubtless for the guest who had arrived the day before.

And here she came—a very old lady; Marianne led her in and Hastings kissed her with immense reverence. It was Marianne's mother.

Yes, old Susanne Chapuset had at last arrived from Stuttgart. She had not seen her daughter since she left with Karl Adam that day for Nuremberg. Madame Chapuset had heard many marvels, certainly, about Marianne's career,

and had also from time to time received many solid tokens of her existence in the form of cheques and hard cash. Nevertheless, she had not overcome her sceptical attitude toward that uncouth foreign land where Marianne lived, nor allowed herself to be bluffed by anything so equivocal as a Governor of India. It was only since her daughter became the mistress of Daylesford that she began to admit that the marriage with Mr. Hastings might not have been a *mésalliance* after all. So now, after thirty-five years, at the age of seventy-seven, she had set off to have a look at her rascal of a son-in-law.

Marianne, meanwhile, had lived in India like a queen. She gave the Governor-General many a tight corner to get out of owing to things she said or did which he himself thought charming—and had to apologize for if the worst came to the worst by pleading her defective English. Then for the sake of her health she left India before her husband and came to London, where she found many a Mrs. Clavering ready to look askance at her as a *divorcée* of questionable repute, and gave herself up with passion to the task of correcting their obliquity of vision for them. This occupied her so exclusively that, when the Governor-General on his return to England was impeached before Parliament for his conduct in India, she scarcely noticed this mammoth trial. She had spent a great deal of money and generously come to the help of her numerous uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins of both sexes, and, of course, her former husband, Baron Imhoff, who now, married once more, was roving round Germany and Austria. She had put her son Charles—a fat, red, boorish fellow—into a very fine job. And now at Daylesford she spoke the same broken English as she had on the *Duke of Grafton* and made the same mistakes, which Mr. Hastings was just as happy as ever to correct.

Marianne led her mother to the breakfast table. The old lady looked out with pleasure at the lake and garden. Then she sat down and comfortably surveyed the breakfast table —but started at the sight of that unwieldy earthenware dish.

For a moment she was puzzled, and then broke out into a hearty laugh. It was a bowl of raspberry fool, a real genuine *Selzhäfele* from Württemberg.

So there they were, the three of them, Hastings drinking tea, Marianne and the old lady coffee. The two ladies smiled as they put their hands out for the *Selzhäfele* and smiled as they helped themselves. It had cost Marianne no end of bother to get it from Stuttgart; but of this she said nothing. It was not necessary. But there was a great deal else the two ladies gossiped about in their nimble Swabian speech.

Warren found the dear, respected mother of his wife wonderful. It was a pity, though, that he could not understand a single word she said; for she spoke only German and this was one of the few languages he did not know. Nevertheless, he listened now and then, smiling politely and happily.

Mother Chapuset stayed only four days. Hastings put her on board the boat and saw that she had every possible attention. He was respectful and assiduous—it was a pity only that he could not exchange one word with her. He stood for a long time looking after the ship. On his return he called in at East India House, in order to keep his eye on an affair of importance. But he made the interview as brief as possible, for he longed to be back at Daylesford and to hear the voice of his wife.

BULLFIGHT

FOR almost a week in advance the arena had been sold out, the cheap seats in the sun as well as the dear seats in the shade; from all the country round people had come in to see the procession in the morning and the bullfight in the late afternoon. For on the programme of this corrida, which moreover was being held for the benefit of an international humanitarian organization, The Red Cross, appeared the

name of the bullfighter Montilla II, who had worked himself up to the first rank of his class, and was, next to the Dictator, the best-known man in Spain.

The painter Greiderer, excited and confidential, attempted a conversation, although he only knew a few scraps of Spanish. His neighbour responded volubly. Without really understanding each other the Bavarian and the Spaniard went on talking, gesticulating the while, both satisfied of the other's interest. Very susceptible to all kinds of popular spectacles, the painter Greiderer saw in this bullfight the supreme point of the Spanish tour which he had allowed himself while his good fortune still held. He had heard a great deal about the blood, the horses with their bellies slashed open, and similar horrors; he waited with tingling curiosity.

The procession of the morning had made a great impression on him. Thoroughly versed in such things, an enthusiastic expert through his knowledge of the Munich Corpus Christi processions, he had appreciated every detail. An endless train had defiled before him, the priests in their rich heavy robes, the saints glittering in barbaric splendour on raised platforms carried by a host of hidden bearers in an agitating, heavy, monotonous march, the flamboyant uniforms of the officers and civic dignitaries, the banners of the Church, the never-ending treasures of the cathedral, the pomp of the military. Horses, troops, cannons. And all these marched over flowers strewn thickly along the route under awnings stretched over the streets to protect them from the hot sun, between carpeted windows and balconies. That made Greiderer open his eyes.

In the afternoon the same crowd who had watched the procession now sat in the arena filling the white stone tiers up to the blinding sky, fluttering gay wraps from the boxes; and after the incense, the pictured saints, the religious ardour of the morning, they waited greedily to see the blood of the bulls, the torn-out entrails of the horses, men thrown into the air and trampled underfoot. Sellers bawled their wares, beer, sweets, fruit, programmes, fans. Advertisement

leaflets flooded all the rows. Men in grey, huge brimmed, cake-shaped felt hats, women in splendid wraps. Shouting, expectation, sweat, excitement.

But there was the quadrilla already entering the arena. They marched briskly to inspiriting music, in gay jackets richly embroidered, and smartly took up their positions on the bright sand. Now the bull was there too. Kept for long hours in darkness, it shrank back from the howling crowd and the harsh light. It butted at the yielding, red, fluttering cloths. Now the horses appeared, wretched hacks with bandaged eyes, ridden by men carrying lances and with their feet in gigantic stirrups. The bull, black, crouching, powerful, gored a lean-ribbed hack on his horns, overthrowing it along with its rider with strange leisureliness. This happened quite near Greiderer who was sitting below at the very front. He saw the coarse face of the uniformed picador. There was a groaning and rending as the bull bored its horns into the horse. Greiderer saw it digging among the entrails, tearing its horns, covered with blood and bowels, out of the horse's belly, in again, out again. *Herrgottsakra*, this was something different from the drawing-room gossip of his fashionable colleagues about the ceramic series, 'Bullfighting.' The excitement which had seized the thirteen thousand other spectators gripped the Bavarian painter Andreas Greiderer, shook him too.

Diverted by the rag-waving of the gay uniformed youths, the bull turned to a new horse which was now being brought up. With his lance the rider tore off a strip of flesh and black hide from the bull. The bull overthrew the horse. Covered with blood and dust the horse was brought to its feet again with great difficulty, driven towards the bull once more, and impaled on his horns and ripped open. The rider hobbled out of the ring. The horse screamed and groaned and kept on trying to get up again, until a man in a red tunic stabbed it.

Lads with short, gay-ribboned darts now presented themselves before the bull. Standing separately in elegant poses they tried to infuriate him by insulting shouts. They

ran up to his fuming nostrils, stepping aside at the last moment, and bored they gay-ribboned darts into his flesh so that they remained sticking. The crowd accompanied every movement, according to its artistic excellence, with thunderous applause or furious execration. The bull, spitted with the gay, torturing lances, dripping with blood, ran round the arena, headed off now by one man, now by another. It knocked one of them over, wounding him, but not seriously.

Now a single figure approached the box of the prefect and took off his two-cornered hat. The toreador. Not Montilla II this time; an espada nevertheless of high rank, well known and highly paid. He posed before the bull. In his left hand he held the red rag, in his right the sword. Standing quite near the bull he incited it with the red rag, poised on his tip-toes with legs close together, alert, cool, only turning his trunk aside sufficiently for the bull to have room to rush past him, then beginning again. Like a puppet on wires he drew on the furious bull, the smallest mistake threatening him with death. His every movement was accompanied with howls of applause from the three thousand spectators, so that, as the twists and turns followed quickly on one another at quite short intervals, the gigantic arena shook with the short, rhythmic bursts of applause.

But now the end was approaching. Small, elegant, his shoulders braced, the espada stood, his sword level with his eye, pointing directly at the bull. But whether through bad luck or through miscalculation, the sword did not pierce to the heart, the bull shook it off. The crowd hissed, raged.

Greiderer understood neither the rage nor the exaltation of the crowd; his neighbour tried to explain the rules according to which the bull had to be dispatched. The painter Greiderer did not quite understand; but he was all for it. He too quivered with the excitement of the shrieking, whistling, exultant crowd. Like his neighbour, like countless others who flung their hats to the celebrated espada when he turned round after artistically killing his bull, the painter

Greiderer of Munich flung his newly purchased Spanish hat into the arena, his hat which had cost 25 pesetas, that was, 1,127 marks.

The bull for the fourth fight was hissed out of the ring. He proved to be a coward. It seemed that, as he was near his end in any case, he desired ignominiously to die in peace. He paid no attention to the showy red rags, nor to the insulting shouts. He had grown fat on a cattle farm in the neighbourhood of Cordova, on a flat plain covered with rich, cool grass, under a wide sky enlivened with flocks of storks. He had grown heavy, three thousand five hundred pesetas of dead weight. Now he stood there in the midst of three thousand spectators, spitted with gay darts, covered with blood, bellowing stupidly and sadly, his urine escaping, longing for death. He pressed his side against the palisade, indifferent to his human tormentors; not even the explosive powder and crackers which they threw upon his neck roused him any longer. He did not wish to go into the ring and the sun again. He wanted to remain standing by the palisade, in the shadow, and die.

The painter Greiderer gazed on in absorption, his seamed peasant face pale with passionate sympathy. He did not understand what was happening, why the people were yelling now for the bull, now for the matador. He had seen many people die, in their beds, in the War, in Munich street-fights, in quarrels. But this spectacle of blood, sand, and sunlight, this strictly regulated, senseless combat, this sublime and disgusting drama, in which, for the entertainment of the spectators, those wretched hacks, those powerful bulls, and, perhaps too, one of those elegant men down there would meet a horrible and very real death, pierced his excitable soul more deeply than any other form of death that he had ever seen.

Then through the lively evening streets he drove to his hotel. Children were playing at bullfights. One was the bull, and ran with lowered head at another who was waving a rag. But the bull disapproved of the matador and gave him a good trouncing. The painter Greiderer crouched in

his car, his face dark with gloomy thought. "Dirty swine!" he growled, thinking of his colleague's ceramic series 'Bullfighting.' From now on there remained imprinted on his mind the picture of the real bull pressing against the palisade, his urine escaping, past troubling about men, swords, gay rags, only desiring to die in the shade.

THE BATTLE CRUISER *ORLOV*

It is so early in the afternoon that all the other cinemas in Berlin are either closed or nearly empty, but in front of this one there is a block of cars, policemen, and onlookers. *The Battle Cruiser* Orlov is a film which has been shown already thirty-six times, four times daily, and thirty-six thousand people have seen it. Yet the crowd is as excited as if this were to be the first performance of a spectacle longed for by the whole world.

Dr. Klenk, over-topping all the people round him, declines to be affected by their excitement. The papers say that it is a film which has no construction, no love-interest, no plot, and that it is mere propaganda instead of drama. The kind of thing he may as well see, since he is in Berlin, but he is not going to let the film Jews take him in with their artfully concocted sensations.

A few bars of strident music, chaotic, *fortissimo*. An excerpt from a secret Admiralty document: on such and such a date the crew of the battle cruiser *Orlov*, then stationed before Odessa, mutinied because of insufficient rations. A mutiny, what? That's nothing new. When he was a boy he revelled in things like that. The very stuff for big boys. Dr. Klenk grins.

The crew's sleeping-quarters. Hammocks slung close together. A petty officer nosing about among the restlessly tossing sailors. Not badly done. The foulness of the air is well conveyed. And the music is muffled and oppressive.

Next morning. Sailors gathering round a bit of meat hanging on a hook. They examine it with disgust. More and more come up to look at it. It doesn't take long to perceive that the meat is stinking. A close-up of the meat: it is crawling with maggots. Apparently this isn't the first time they've had meat in that condition. They rage about it. Well, that's comprehensible. The ship's doctor is brought along, a somewhat perky gentleman. He puts on his pince-nez, does his duty, inspects the meat, and announces that it is not unfit for consumption. The meat is cooked. The crew refuse to eat it and grumble again. Trivial occurrences, simply portrayed without emphasis. A bit of stinking meat, sailors, officers. Not particularly gifted officers, apparently, but not particularly bad ones either. A good average. Officers in Bavaria aren't much better. It is strange that these simple events should so move Dr. Klenk.

The resentment on board swells: one cannot rightly tell how. But there is no doubt that an outburst is bound to come: everybody in the audience feels it. The officers on the screen are taking it too lightly: they ought to intervene decisively, to crush it. Are they blind? Yet in the last year of the War we felt the same kind of thing coming, and we didn't intervene until it was too late. Of course we hadn't this hammering music to work us up: it's simply infernal, this music, but one can't escape its effect. Certainly this film should be censored. It's nothing but a subtle swindle, playing on people's emotions. A bit of maggoty meat is no real reason for throwing discipline overboard. In the War we had to put up with worse than that. . . . And yet Klenk is not entirely on the officers' side, he cannot help sympathizing with the men.

The threatening, insistent music continues, the tension increases. The captain parades the crew on deck and asks: who has any complaints to make about the rations? A few men step forward. Suddenly, one can hardly tell how, these malcontents, the best of the crew and the leading spirits on board, are isolated: a broad and dangerous space yawns

between them and the others. Damned clever fellows, these officers; now they've got the mutineers where they want them. The main body of the crew stands in a frightened mass. The little group of leaders is roped off, penned up in a corner. Once they spoke loudly enough, but now they are a wretched, trembling huddle of bodies. A piece of sail-cloth is already spread over them: one or two pathetic, grotesque movements are visible through the canvas. Rifles are trained upon them. Commands ring out, cold and precise. One of the men in the main body of the crew opens his mouth and screams in horror. The order to fire is given. But no shot follows it. The rifles do not go off.

A frenzy seizes the people, both those on the screen and those in front of it. Why did the men wait so long? But now the issue is joined, now they are rebelling, now at last the time has come. And the people in front of the screen cheer and applaud those on the screen. They overwhelm the relentless, triumphant, insistent, horrible music with their clapping, while on the screen a wild orgy begins as the sailors hunt the officers out of their ridiculous hiding-holes and pitch them overboard into the merrily splashing waves, one after the other, the perky ship's doctor among them, and his pince-nez after him.

Klenk sits very still, his breathing is troubled, the huge man sits still as a mouse. It is stupid to censor this sort of thing. It's there, it's in the air one breathes, it exists in the world, it exists in a world of its own; it is madness to close one's eyes to it. One simply must look at it, must listen to this music, one can't simply prohibit it.

The flags are pulled down. A new flag flutters up the mast amid tremendous enthusiasm, a red flag. Sailors take over the officers' duties: the machinery doesn't function any the worse for that. Flying the red flag, the ship sails into Odessa harbour.

Odessa regards the red flag shyly at first, then the people open their mouths and cheer. They breathe more freely, they break out in rejoicing, they cheer loudly and clearly. At first one by one, then in crowds, the whole city comes

in pilgrimage to the ship with the red flag, and to the single sailor who was shot and whose body has been sent ashore; they swarm in rowing boats round the ship with the red flag, and bring some of their meagre provisions to give to the sailors.

Klenk is growing restive. Are the others going to give no sign of life? Are they simply going to allow this to go on? He isn't in the least on the other side, he is far too full-blooded not to be carried away by the impetuousness of the mutiny. Only he is annoyed because the lack of reprisals is beginning to give a touch of falsity to the whole affair, which has been so genuine up till now. He is annoyed because it doesn't ring true.

But, see, it's all right, after all. There they come, the others. They haven't been idle meanwhile, and there they are.

A flight of steps is shown. An enormous, broad flight of steps, which goes on for ever. The populace, in an endless train, are climbing up to bring their sympathy to the mutineers. But not long; for the others are on these steps. A line of Cossacks advance down the steps slowly, menacingly, invincibly, their rifles under their arms, barring the whole breadth of the stair. The people waver. The wavering movement quickens, they hasten, they run, they take to their heels, they fly. A few have not noticed anything, or do not understand, they still climb on slowly in stupid amazement. The soldiers' boots are shown descending the stair slowly, step after step; the boots are gigantic, and a little smoke issues from the barrels of the rifles. But now the crowd no longer climb up the stairs; they fling themselves down it, as fast as their wind, their legs will permit. But a few are rolling down, and it is no longer their will that propels them, or their limbs or lungs, but simply the law of gravity: for they are dead. And the boots of the Cossacks go tramping on with the same regularity, and more and more people roll down the steps. A woman who has been pushing a perambulator is no longer doing so: no one knows what has become of her, she has simply

disappeared; but the perambulator goes on alone of its own impetus, down one step, and then another, and a sixth and a tenth, until finally it comes to a stop. And behind it, slow and enormous, the boots of the Cossacks.

On the sea, too, they haven't been idle meanwhile. Other ships have been summoned, gigantic, powerful ships. They surround the *Orlov*. On the ship with the red flag everything is clear for action. Her huge, smooth, glittering guns are being trained, and rise up and down like threatening fabulous monsters: the needles on the dials fly backwards and forwards wildly. All around they come on, the great steel vessels of destruction, powerful and perfect to the last detail. The *Orlov* advances towards them. The ships which are surrounding her, hunting her down, are of the same class as herself, six, eight, ten of them. There is no chance for the *Orlov* to get through, for her guns carry no farther than theirs. She cannot win, she can only, in dying, drag the others to the same destruction. On the screen and in front of it reigns a wild, agonized suspense, as slowly the gigantic ships close in a circle round the *Orlov*.

Then the condemned ship begins to send out signals. Tiny coloured flags rise and fall. The *Orlov* signals: "Don't fire, brothers." She steams slowly towards her enemies, signalling: "Don't fire." One can hear the laboured breathing of the audience; the suspense is almost unendurable. Don't fire! is what these eight hundred people in the Berlin cinema are wishing and praying with all their might. Is the Minister Klenk a mild and peaceful man? He is hardly that, he would laugh heartily if anyone thought he was that; he is a rough, wild, aggressive man, there's nothing soft about him. Yet, while the mutineers' battleship is steaming towards the loaded guns, what is he thinking? He, too, with all the wild ardour of his heart is praying: Don't fire!

A boundless joy fills everybody's heart when the circle of enemy ships lets the *Orlov* pass, and she sails unscathed into the neutral harbour.

When, his frieze cloak over his shoulders, his felt hat

on his great head, the Minister Klenk stepped out of the darkness of the cinema into the bright street, he was filled with a hitherto unknown embarrassment. What had taken him? Was it likely that he would refuse to fire on mutineers? How was it possible that a man like him had actually wished them not to fire? Well, there it was, one could prohibit it, but there it was; there was no sense in closing one's eyes to it.

He caught sight of his face reflected in a shop window, and saw in it an expression of helplessness which he had never observed before. Yes, he looked just like an animal in a trap. What could have taken him? His face didn't look like his own face at all. He smiled a little wryly, waved for a taxi, tapped his pipe, and stuck it in his mouth. And already his features had recaptured the old, energetic, satisfied, complacent expression.

WOLLSTEIN'S TRUNK CHECKS

HERR WOLLSTEIN was a well-known dealer in works of art. His gallery was small, but known for the fact that nothing of an inferior quality ever found its way into it.

Herr Wollstein was in his early fifties, of stocky build, almost stout. From his fleshy face gazed a pair of brown eyes, sad and veiled, but able unexpectedly to assume a shrewd and lively expression. He was rather awkward, his words came haltingly, and he readily admitted that he had not the slightest literary ability. He liked to stress the business man rather than the art connoisseur. Once in a while, however, he would come out of his shell; then it became apparent that, although he disdained the patter common to art critics, he had a refined knowledge and a fanatical love of matters of art.

I made Herr Wollstein's closer acquaintance on a trip, during which we happened to share a compartment for several hours. He seemed to like me, and I liked him. He loosened up in conversation, and when we parted he invited me to spend an evening at his home.

This I did. His stepdaughter was there, a clever and rather plain girl in the mid-twenties. Another guest, too, was expected, and they kept putting off the meal. But when more than half an hour beyond the appointed time had passed, the girl insisted that we start eating, that's the way Herr Frey was, and we sat down to table.

We had almost finished our meal by the time Frey arrived. He was a man of about thirty, a painter. No sooner had he come in than Herr Wollstein grew lively. The artist did not offer an apology, his manner was brusque and overbearing, and I rather disliked him. Herr Wollstein's praise of the young man's artistic achievements, while by no means unreserved, was enthusiastic.

Herr Frey did not stay long. After he had gone, the young woman complained of all the trouble to which Frey put her stepfather. But Herr Wollstein said that that had to be put up with. Great things might be expected of Herbert Frey, although he still had much to learn.

Others told me they could not quite understand what Herr Wollstein saw in Herbert Frey's paintings. Personally, he was quite a disagreeable chap. Later, I ran across his name in connection with a tale of scandal.

I met Herr Wollstein again in Paris, after Nazi mastery had put an end to German art. He established a small gallery, which quickly made its mark. Herr Wollstein never failed to ask me to his house if I was in Paris. Whenever I called, I met there a certain Michael K., a young Pole, rather slovenly, shy, and yet arrogant. Herr Wollstein remarked that Michael still had much to learn, but that he had great hopes of him. His pictures, which the art dealer showed me proudly and enthusiastically, did not particularly impress me. Friends of mine were of a similar opinion. They regarded the pictures as neither good nor bad. But

Herr Wollstein insisted that it took some time for a genius of Michael K.'s calibre to mature. "To be sure," he said, "his 'Green Old Man' is still strongly influenced by the early Picasso, but, you'll see, Michael will get to the very top."

For the time being, Michael K. gave Herr Wollstein, and especially his daughter, nothing but trouble. He spent a good deal of money, which was provided by Wollstein. He started an affair with the man's daughter and held out tooth and nail against marrying her. This was not at all to the rather puritanic stepfather's liking. But it did not influence his judgment of Michael K.'s artistic performance, nor did it prevent him from continuing his financial support.

Later, it was in August, 1939, when I was staying in my little village in southern France, Herr Wollstein called me up from Paris and informed me proudly and happily that Michael K. had hit it off. He had painted three pictures which revealed the greatness which Herr Wollstein had sensed in him from the very beginning. He would exhibit K.'s work late in September, and I must under all circumstances manage to come to Paris for the opening.

But before the exhibition could come to pass, Hitler invaded Poland. Incidentally, during the months of the deceptive 'phony' war, Herr Wollstein told me that Michael K. had joined the Polish Legion. He himself was hoping to go to America in May. No sense in working in France any longer. But he would show Michael K.'s pictures in New York, and when the artist returned from the war the whole world would know him for what he really was.

The place at which I met Herr Wollstein next was the concentration camp of Les Mille, near Aix. The Nazis had invaded Holland, and the French had indiscriminately interned all of us—Germans, Czechs, Poles, Dutch, and stateless—in concentration camps. Conditions at Les Mille were far from good, and a man was able to show of what stuff he was made. Herr Wollstein had good stuff in him.

He acquitted himself well. He was always calm and patient, gave aid wherever he could; he had clever ideas, and he managed to make the best of a bad situation. I shall never forget how he nursed me through an attack of dysentery.

In spite of the man's outward calmness, it was plain to me that something was weighing heavily upon him. After a number of false starts, he finally did unburden himself to me. He told me that he carried on his person his most important possessions, his most precious art treasures. "Here they are," he said when he saw my look of astonishment, producing a number of baggage checks. I still did not understand. He explained that, before fleeing from Parirs he had taken the most valuable of his paintings from thei, frames and had carefully manipulated them along the walls of his trunks behind the lining. Then he had shipped the trunks to various railway stations in France, mostly in central and southern France, to be held until called for. There were altogether eighteen of them, and they contained a total of twenty-nine paintings. Among them were the Matisse and the Picasso, which I knew, furthermore the two little pieces by Degas, a Tiepolo, and a doubtful Franz Hals. Above all, however, there were the three paintings by Michael K. At any rate, the pictures were safe from the hands of the Nazis for the time being; his own fortune and K.'s lifework might yet be saved.

Now I comprehended Herr Wollstein's difficulties: those precious canvases scattered all over France, a country at the enemy's mercy, and he alone holding the keys to the treasure, the baggage checks. Michael K. was fighting in the Polish Legion, heaven only knew where, perhaps he had already perished. Herr Wollstein had no news at all of his stepdaughter; she, too, had probably been sent to a concentration camp. In the midst of the general confusion and collapse, we prisoners in Les Mille could not hope for news from the outside world.

Herr Wollstein was thus unable to make use of the baggage checks. To make matters worse, in the hurry of his stratagem, he had not been able to record which painting

was hidden in which trunk. So, if there were a possibility of his redeeming the trunks, say in Montpellier, he wouldn't even know what to expect to find inside. I believed in his sincerity when he said to me: "To save the Matisse or the Picasso is important. But it is far more important to save the three paintings by Michael K. Everybody knows about Picasso and Matisse; but you and I and he himself are the only ones who know about Michael K."

The situation became more critical all the time. Paris fell, the Nazis advanced, they were before Lyons. We ourselves, imprisoned, were in the utmost danger. At the last moment, the Frenchmen sent us to the farthest southwestern corner of their country, to get us overseas from there. Too late. The armistice came, and the Nazis demanded that a large part of us be surrendered to them. Herr Wollstein and myself were presumably on their list.

During all of our weird progress, Herr Wollstein carried his baggage checks with him. He didn't know what had become of his stepdaughter, the Polish Legion, or Michael K.

The days dragged on. The nights, brief as they were, seemed endless to us. The danger of being surrendered to the Nazis became ever more imminent. Eventually American friends of mine succeeded in spiriting me out of the concentration camp. Kept in hiding by them, I lived in Marseille, waiting for an opportunity to escape across the border.

The opportunity came at last. My friends had done good work. During a certain night, over a certain mountain path, with a local guide, I was to have my chance. I asked if I might take somebody along. After some hesitation, this was granted.

At my request, my friends got in touch with Herr Wollstein and succeeded in wangling a ten-hours' leave of absence for him for medical consultation in Marseille. While his guard stood in wait before the doctor's house, he was brought to me.

I put the situation to Herr Wollstein. Gravely he shook

his heavy, fleshy, shrewd, thoughtful head. "I'm ever so much obliged to you," he said, "but I can't go along." What deterred the slow-going man who was getting on in years was not the hardships and dangers of the undertaking. "You understand—the baggage checks," he said. I did not understand. I did not see why a man should cling to his possessions so tenaciously as to jeopardize his very life for their sake. I tried to make it clear to him that there would probably be no second opportunity for flight and that he was lost if he remained behind. "It isn't a matter of the Matisse and the Tiepolo and the Picasso," he replied, "but of the works of the artist Michael K."

"But you don't even know whether he is still alive," I argued.

"If he should have perished," Herr Wollstein replied stubbornly, "it is all the more important to save his work. Your friends," he continued, "have made it possible for me to redeem four of my trunks. If but one of Michael K.'s pictures had been in them, I might have permitted my cowardice to persuade me to go with you. As it is, I'll have to stay."

"Could you not let my friends have your baggage checks? They can handle it better than you," I suggested.

"I am sure," he replied, "that your friends would do anything if a person's life were at stake. But who is there to understand that such pictures are of even greater importance?"

When, after an adventurous trip, I arrived in Lisbon, I had to wait there a few days. On the last day, a message from Herr Wollstein reached me at the American Consulate. He informed me in a rather cryptic manner that he had been able to save one of Michael K.'s pictures. But he himself was still at the camp.

After I had safely reached America, I induced my friends to make efforts in behalf of Wollstein. I applied to any number of committees; to the Red Cross. Reports came that this individual or that, an ever-growing number of refugees and prisoners, had been surrendered to the Nazis.

It grew more and more difficult to obtain reliable information about French concentration camps. Months passed without any news from Herr Wollstein. I gave up all hope.

One day, in October of last year, Mr. Donald W. B., an art lover of San Francisco, showed me his collection of pictures. A painting, simple and vigorous, attracted my attention. Those colours, those lines—I ought to know them. Who was the artist? It turned out that the painting was the work of one Herbert Frey.

I looked up. Herbert Frey? Wasn't he the painter I had met at Herr Wollstein's . . . ? Yes, said Mr. B., Herbert Frey had been discovered by a German art dealer, a certain Herr Wollstein. Three times in the past the man had enthusiastically recommended young painters to Mr. B., and every time they had achieved prominence.

I told Mr. B. of Herr Wollstein's predicament. Mr. B. was a rich and highly influential man. "Why, it would be an outrage," he said, "if we couldn't get our Herr Wollstein out of his mess. Let me take care of that."

Shortly before the United States entered the war I received a detailed letter from Herr Wollstein. He was safe in Lisbon. He reported that he had been able to salvage five of his paintings, among them the one by Michael K. The latter was alive, although he had been wounded just before the armistice was concluded. His right arm had to be amputated at the elbow. But Michael K., so Herr Wollstein wrote, would surely be able to manage even with his left hand.

THE LITTLE SEASON

THE little old gentleman whose severe expression and locks of white hair suggested the actor or the cleric was walking along the lakeside promenade at Vörtschau. As he went by with one hand behind his back, wearing a well-preserved

but old-fashioned and rather too long coat, a white tie, and a wide-brimmed, pinched-in felt hat, he had the air of someone of importance who was accustomed to being taken notice of. Also he was by no means close-fisted and did not look twice at a ten-shilling note. And yet the inhabitants made heavy and not at all amiable fun of him when he had passed. It had been a poor season, and one old boy does not make a summer.

Poor Austria, unlike the German Empire, had stabilized her currency; hence living was dear for Germans at Vörtschau, their beloved Carinthian summer resort; and the place, though it relied on German summer visitors, had seen remarkably few of them. Moreover, it had rained. The season was over before its time. The Hotel Mangart had dismissed most of its staff already and closed the main building. Meals were served in the annexe. The café and *pâtisserie* were closed. The bathing establishment was still at the disposal of visitors, though there was no staff there and they had to look after themselves. The branches of Vienna firms had put up their shutters once more; barbers, musicians, waiters, and all the various people who found employment during the season had returned in a dudgeon to the metropolis.

The old gentleman continued his walk along the beautiful lakeside road, now strewn with fallen leaves, past villas whose shutters were bolted and barred. He went the same way every day. The bathing-huts were locked, the rowboats drawn up on the beach, the Navigation Company's large motor-boat traversed the sunny lake idly and alone. The natives sat about in indolence and bad temper. It was an insult to be given the promise of warm and peerless weather now when the summer was at an end. Who was there to make these beauties of nature pay? There were scarcely a hundred people in the whole place.

The little old gentleman strolled gently along with his air of importance, enjoying the pleasant warmth. The surface of the lake was barely broken with ripples of a tender hue. The wooded hills, the peaks behind, newly

decked in snow, were spotless in the calm sky. A gardener was tying up plants with bast, a man in shirt-sleeves hammering up a hut with large nails. They said good day to the stranger. To watch him go by was a welcome excuse for interrupting their mild activities. They grinned when he had passed; his small size and self-importance and his frog's mouth struck them as funny. They had found out already all there was to know about him, and it was not much; you couldn't with the best will in the world make a long story of it. He was called Robert Wickersberg, took his meals at the Hotel Mangart, and was staying at the Villa Kainzenhuber. There he had two rooms to himself, which he had taken without even questioning the excessive price Frau Kainzenhuber, the Privy Councillor's widow, asked for them. If he had refused to pay it, the natives would have abused him mercilessly; when he did, they laughed at him for his innocence.

The old gentleman meanwhile arrived at the end of the promenade, with his soft felt hat in his hand and the wind playing about his white-thatched head, in which his teeth, projecting at an angle, resembled roof tiles. Here there was a small open space with seats and a bust of the far-famed composer of songs, Matthias Laischacher, who had been a native of the place. The old gentleman stopped in front of the bust and took a good look at it. The composer must have had a coarse, fleshy face with a plentiful moustache; and the bronze bust did not succeed in subduing the hopeless vulgarity of the man it represented. The composer had formed a quartet with three of his fellow-countrymen; he himself sang, and his quartet became famous; he had given recitals on both sides of the ocean, earning much money and many honours.

The old gentleman regarded the bust earnestly without a smile while he pictured this man with his three colleagues, all in dress clothes, singing his tender melodies to a crowded concert hall. He pictured all this to himself still without a smile, and without a smile read the bombastic inscription which paid honour in swelling words to

the banal and sentimental music of a successful fellow-townsman.

A path branched off from the little open space around the bust, leading steeply up into the woods. It was neglected and quite lonely. The old gentleman climbed up it. He had been longing for solitude and now he ardently embraced it. Yes, his name was Robert Wickersberg; but that, even though the inhabitants had never heard of it, was a far from obscure name. Robert Wickersberg passed as one of the few true poets of his country; with many, as the first among them.

He lived austerely in the seclusion of a small town surrounded by a circle of devoted disciples. It was exacting to live year after year like that, expressing opinions each of which was authoritative; always being the first, always behaving accordingly, never shirking by word or gesture the onus of responsibility. Even though one had nothing but contempt for the opinion of the world, it seeped through; and even though newspapers were banished from the Presence, yet from the lips of disciples one heard what they contained. One lived in an ivory tower, but the world was still there below; it was in one's eye, and the sight of it fretted the soul. It was imperative to have a rest from it all, a respite from the domestic autocracy over one's following and from being constantly in the view, even though a distant view, of the bustling world. So without warning, without a word to anyone of his destination, he came away to Vörtschau, suspecting that it was one of the few places in the whole country where his name was unknown.

Arriving at the eminence to which the path led, he sat down on the bench placed there to afford a view of the beautiful though not exhilarating prospect, and surveyed the mountains and the lake. It was the sixth day of his stay. He walked about among people who were slow, uncouth, avaricious, simple-minded—a great man whose eminence no one knew; he sat on benches here or there, lay under trees, swam, rowed. All in moderation, the same as at home.

It was all just as he had expected, and yet not as he had expected.

At home not a newspaper was allowed in his sight; here it was all he could do not to seize upon the local papers which lay about in the hotel. At home no stranger was permitted to cross his threshold, and his intimates counted their words lest they weary him. Here he talked every morning to his landlady, Frau Kainzenhuber, and at midday to the manager of the Hotel Mangart. Frau Kainzenhuber, since he was accustomed to drink tea, dwelt at length on the appetizing and beneficent qualities of Austrian coffee. The manager opened up on Austrian wine, of which the cheaper growths were particularly to be commended; and then on the bad season and all it meant, on the song composer Matthias Laischacher, of whom he possessed a score in the original manuscript. It was a tender melody, set to words which described the faithfulness till death of two lovers who set out at eve over the calm bosom of the lake. The manager had already twice shown him this manuscript in its costly frame.

The poet Robert Wickersberg looked at his watch and walked back to the hotel for lunch. He was early, but in spite of this he found the sparse company already assembled. There was nothing to do here, particularly at this dead season, but wait from one meal to the next. Herr Wickersberg observed his fellow-guests. There were a few insignificant persons, petty officials and stenographers of the higher type; then there was a Jewish married couple from Vienna, a shrewd and effeminate-looking solicitor with an exuberant and vivacious wife; lastly, a family party who spoke Saxon, consisting of a well-dressed father, a haughty mother, and a young, loud, pretty daughter. It was clear that some of them had been asking each other about the man of the peculiar appearance. No doubt also they had discovered his name, but it was certain to mean nothing to them to know that it was Robert Wickersberg. He had persistently mocked at the opinion of the world; interviewers found him haughtily dumb, photographers invisible.

And yet it rather dashed him that his name should mean nothing at all to these people.

After lunch he went to the bathing establishment. It was utterly deserted. He got undressed. The skin of his well-cared-for body was still perfectly smooth. The bathing during the last few days had reddened it; to-morrow it would be tanned. Robert Wickersberg mounted to the gallery, anointed himself with oil, and lay down on the planks. He shut his eyes and, stretched out at full length, basked in the hot sun. The ripples plashed and from the distance he heard the hammering of the man who was nailing up the hut.

An aeroplane came over at a great height; the sound of the engines was no more than a soft hum. It was the regular Vienna-Venice service. One might go to Venice again—but no, there would be people there who would recognize him. The flight here over the mountains from Vienna had been very beautiful. Really, being here was exactly what he wanted. The climate suited him; he had not felt so vigorous for years. He was sure his projects would thrive in the deliberately courted boredom of the place. His play *Asmodai*, of which two acts were completed, would come to something. He was not written out—not an old man by any means. Last century a man was done for at fifty or sixty. To-day that was not the case. Human longevity—all the statistics proved it—was increasing. He had lived a healthy life—even though he might have drunk his share. But he had no thought of making his exit—far from it. They called the coloured and exquisite school of which he was master a thing of the past; but when a little more water had flowed under the bridge they would find that it had the stamp of immortality. Its adherents might not be many, but they would not diminish and they were the best. Even the reviewers sensed that. The younger generation, the upstarts who made fun of him, had many illusions to live through yet. A few lean years—admitted; but now new life stirred in him. It would, after all, have been a bore if everything were already attained. It was just

as well that something still remained to do. *Asmodai* would open their eyes—even Franz, the waiter's.

The face of the poet Wickersberg contracted at the thought of the waiter Franz. Franz was the thorn in his side. He was the head waiter of the café which the poet had patronized for forty years and still, now that he was a celebrity, patronized every two months or so. Franz had been at the café for nearly the whole of the time and had much to thank the poet for—many clients, big tips, interviews in the papers. But Franz, and this was the worm that ate into the poet's heart, had no belief in him. Franz had heard the poet sharply criticized; there had been many a fierce battle before Robert Wickersberg was enthroned as the god of his circle; certain persons—some of whom now belonged to the communion of believers, while others were banished for ever from it—had expressed their views without picking their words. Franz had frequently gathered that Wickersberg's marmoreal verse was tripe. Had Wickersberg been able to convince himself that these vulgar gibes were alone responsible for it, then Franz's unbelief would have passed him by. But he knew well that Franz had formed his own opinion, not at random, but out of the matured judgment of a man with a wide knowledge of men.

He had never expressed this opinion to the poet's face. He was a well-trained waiter and knew his place. But Wickersberg could read it in his eye and in the manner with which Franz put his coffee down before him. And though, as time went on, the sales of Wickersberg's plays ran into thousands, though they were translated into every language under the sun and even produced on the stage in Japan, the waiter Franz was as polite, as attentive, and as unconvinced as ever. Both knew it without a word said. Only once, shortly after his fiftieth birthday, when the homage of the whole world of letters still hung in a cloud of incense about the poet's knees, Wickersberg had asked: "Well, Franz, still nothing to say?" But the waiter merely looked back at him sadly, and regretfully raised his shoulders.

This, then, was what passed through the poet's mind in the deserted bathing establishment of Vörtschau; and the poet's mind was vexed. But the sun melted his annoyance. He thought of the verses about the desert in his play of *Solomon and Asmodai*, the verses in which the yellow expanses of the desert were caught for all time. He lay on the warm planks of the gallery; his well-preserved, though no longer youthful body gleamed with oil and a light perspiration, and he was filled with an exquisitely pleasant indolence.

Someone else arrived. Robert Wickersberg raised himself on one elbow and peeped through the balustrade. It was the little Saxon girl he had seen in the restaurant. She had come in bathing dress and cloak. She looked up and smiled, expecting him to say something. But he said nothing, so she stayed below and lay down in the sun.

The little Saxon girl was pretty, charming, and slender. Her eyes were long and narrow and of a deep, rather stupid blue, and she had a nice laugh. But what did she matter? He was possessed now by his pleasant indolence, and, besides, there were his plans to ponder. He was in good form; he was going to give his detractors something to think of. They were good plans.

They were wretched plans. *Asmodai* might possibly have come to something. His vision at the time had been clear, the colours strong and rich. His inner self found expression when the king put the demon on the throne in his own place, and himself descended among the last of men on the edge of the desert in order to experience human life to the bottom. He had written the first act right off at one go. It was good stuff and came unforced out of the fullness of his inspiration. So far his vision had flowed and flowered. But he got no further. The sail had flapped against the mast and there it still flapped. Three times, four times, he had set to work. Once a breeze sprang up and that yellow song of the desert came into his mind. But for the rest, no melody had come; it was laboured, dry, without impetus. No one but himself would know it. He had the hand of a master; even

dull and soulless clay shaped by his hand took on the sheen of marble. But it was clay all the same and he knew it.

Be that as it might—the desert verses were good, verses of his own brand, the brand of his best years. Let the upstarts of to-day try and do the like. He stretched himself in the sun, dried the pleasant light perspiration, anointed himself afresh, turned on the other side, laid his head on his bent arm. The days here had done him good. It was here the verses of the desert had come to him. He had chosen well: Vörtschau at this season was the very place for him. Its inhabitants were a smug and money-grubbing lot, hard and dull; all the same it was a good place, and one day they would say: "Here Robert Wickersberg wrote his play *Solomon and Asmodai.*"

He might really venture to give himself rope. He might venture to glance at a newspaper now and then, perhaps even have a word with the Saxon girl. He was so little tempted by life in its lower manifestations that a sniff or two at it merely emphasized the salubrious abstinence of his days in his native land. He got up and went to the balustrade. Yes, there she was, still lying in the sun, slender and pretty in her bathing suit. He descended the steps. She turned her head and eyed him through the slits of her eyes. He walked past her and her gaze very lazily followed him. He sprinkled himself in order to accustom himself to the coolness and then cautiously stepped down into the water and swam about for a few minutes. Then he got out of the water again and gave himself a good shake. Then he went up the steps to the gallery, wrapped himself in his bathing cloak, and leaning over the rail, looked down upon the Saxon girl who still lay in the same spot in the sun.

Suddenly she said, blinking indolently: "Why on earth didn't you dive in?"

He, feeling foolish and not knowing quite what to reply, finally hedged: "I think my way is more sensible."

"I should find it a bore—creeping in an inch at a time," she observed.

After this they exchanged a few more aimless remarks.

She spoke a very strong Saxon and what she said was inane. But the poet somehow found her nicely formed, and the way she luxuriated in the sun was a charming sight. Without warning she took the offensive.

"What on earth do you find to do at Vörtschau?" she asked. "I should think a grown man would perish of boredom here."

"Perhaps," he said, "I wish to be bored."

"Oh—by talking to me? You're very polite," she remarked tartly.

Wickersberg took no offence at her Saxon ways.

"Why are you here yourself if you find it a bore?" he asked.

She told him without hesitation that she had been unable to induce her parents to choose a livelier place. Her father, a Dresden manufacturer, had to have peace and nature for his holidays. The best she had been able to do was to get him to promise to take her to Venice in a fortnight's time. Suddenly she sprang nimbly to her feet and, saying she was too hot, took a header into the lake.

She was out again in a moment and joined him, squealing and splashing.

Robert Wickersberg knew that the smiles women gave him were generally because of his achievements, his name and success, perhaps his influence. It gladdened him that he now found favour with the girl merely as Herr Wickersberg, that she was attracted to him even when he did not stand on the pedestal of his fame.

She sat confidingly beside him, looking very pretty in her wet bathing suit, and told him all about herself. Her parents were prosperous, but it was just too boring to live as the model daughter of the house with no prospect other than a conventional marriage. She took lessons in singing and aspired to get to Berlin. There, with her looks, she would certainly land on her feet. Probably her parents would capitulate when they saw she really meant it. She told him all this in a single outburst, in her funny Saxon. Wickersberg listened. She spoke sensibly: she didn't believe she had great

talent, but she could surely hold her own with the ordinary musical comedy girl. "Or do you think I'm not pretty enough for a Berlin revue?" She really was very pretty. Her name was Ilse.

They agreed to take a stroll together after dinner. Her parents would probably be tired; if not, they must, whatever happened, be left to trot on behind. So now they had a little plot between them.

Wickersberg had gone to Vörtschau in a listless mood. His successes had ceased to cheer him and he found no pleasure even in the lack of success of younger men. He took no joy in writing and none in reading. The placid lake was no pleasure to him, nor the clean line of the mountains, nor the sense of his own well-preserved vigour. But now he went back through the town with a quicker step. He embarked on a conversation with the woman who sold fruit at the corner. He bought Vienna papers at the little general store. He read the gossip with interest, cheered by a malicious anecdote about a fellow-writer and a reverent mention of his own name. He took a seat on the promenade, beating time with his soft and shapely hand, to a melody which had come into his mind. Natives who passed by shook their heads and wrote him off as balmy.

He returned to his rooms and shaved himself for the second time, changed his coat and collar, and spoke a few words to old Frau Kainzenhuber with such an engaging air that she found him for once quite the gentleman and really affable. During dinner he entered into intimate conversation with the manager and flattered him still further by a request to be shown once again the manuscript of the composer Matthias Laischacher. He drank the palatable Austrian wine, and made an antiquated observation to the strapping, vivacious waitress which had a faint echo of gallantry about it. She took it up with a tactful laugh.

At last came the assignation for the after-dinner stroll. The parents, after a slight recalcitrance, trotted on ahead somewhere, and he found himself left in the darkness with the Saxon girl. But she had altered since the afternoon; she

was wayward and antagonistic. He realized with bitterness that he was a white-haired owl. She asked him what he did when he was at home. He wrote, he replied, without committing himself further.

"If you write for the newspapers," she said, "you might be some use to me."

When he did not take this hint, she decided he was bragging and became extremely sharp.

He saw that he would not make a good impression unless he appealed to his books, but shame deterred him when he was on the point of trying to enlighten her. Had he come to this little retreat to start a foolish flirtation with a girl who was no different from a thousand others of her kind? Her Saxon father was fully justified if he laughed at him for a white-haired old fool. The poet sank into silence.

"You're tired and boring," the Saxon girl informed him with a sniff.

Next day he was again the petulant, lonely old gentleman. He went for a walk, gazed for a long while and with disgust at the bust of Laischacher, the composer of songs, rowed on the lake. Later he came upon the Saxon girl at the bathing station. But she was not alone. Beside her in a bathing gown lay a young man who, in Herr Wickersberg's opinion, appeared arrogant and loud. The girl was laughing excitedly, and there was no doubt at all that they were getting on very well indeed. The poet lay down above, as on the day before. Probably she was making fun of him for the benefit of that rather vulgar youth. She was perfectly at liberty to do so. In any case it was a matter of utter indifference to him. He shut his eyes. Delightful to lie in the sun—it would be even more delightful if one had the sun entirely to oneself. The noisy chatter of those young people disturbed him.

After a while he went down to have a swim. The Saxon girl called out to him. This led to a little talk in which the young man joined with the amiable politeness of an Austrian. They spoke of bathing and of the charm of the little island

which lay opposite. During the season a café was open there, and people rowed out to it, swimming a good part of the way. They discussed whether it would be too much to swim the whole distance. The young man said that for him it would be nothing at all. Herr Wickersberg said that he was a fairly strong swimmer himself, though out of training at the moment. The Saxon girl looked at him with her narrow, dark blue eyes and then looked at the youth. "It's easy to talk," she said.

"Do you think," asked Wickersberg, "that I couldn't swim it?"

Again she looked from him to the youth and shrugged her shoulders. She looked charmingly slender and youthful in her bathing suit.

Robert Wickersberg descended the wooden steps into the lake. One of the steps was shaky and he was precipitated rather ludicrously into the water. The girl laughed. The poet swam a few trial strokes and turned over on his back. The afternoon was getting on. The water was not exactly warm. It was easy to tell that autumn had come. The Saxon girl and the youth leant on the rail and shouted some remark after him. He headed for the island.

He swam with an easy, regular stroke and then lay on his back and rested. He was really a practiced swimmer and had covered long distances in southern seas. The water of this Alpine lake had certainly less buoyancy and it was also devilish cold. He swam more quickly to keep himself warm. He enjoyed the physical sensation of the water and the movement, and had long since forgotten the Saxon girl. He was now quite close to the island. He turned over again and lay with his eyes shut, gently rocking on the surface with a solemn, childish expression on his face; above were the sparse white clouds of an evening sky. Then he swam the last stretch and proudly strode ashore with as much pride as if he had pulled off the final act of *Asmodai*. Very soon he felt strangely cold and began to shiver. It was disgusting to have that stupid café closed just then. He ran to and fro and made violent movements of the arms.

The stones and pebbles hurt his naked feet. But he could not get warm.

He went back into the lake with repugnance. It was dusk and really cold. He swam quickly and strongly with his chin sunk in the water. Then he told himself he would have to husband his strength. Out and forward—steady. He decided to count three hundred strokes and then return to the crawl for a bit. But in spite of the cold he had to rest. Otherwise he would never do it. The wind in his face was detestable; no peace from those beastly ripples breaking against his ears and mouth. It was costing him a good quarter of an hour having the wind against him. The shore seemed to retreat farther and farther instead of drawing any nearer. There was surely a current taking him out of his course. It was quite dark by this time. The devil only knew how long he had been swimming. Disgusting. But he must not hurry. He must control himself. No squandering of strength and time. That light there must never leave his eye. Not an inch must he deviate from his course, not a single unnecessary movement must he make. Thus he laboured on in the cold and darkness, regularly, quietly, breathing hard, with beating heart and neck extended.

He was blue with cold when he gripped the steps that led up to the bathing station; he was shivering violently, and it was all he could do to pull himself up to the level of the railings. He stood with panting sides. His face was glazed and stiff as he tried to chafe his arms and legs. It was night; there was not a soul about; the Saxon girl and the youth had long since gone. The lake was black and sinister. A wind and no moon.

Robert Wickersberg pulled on his clothes as fast as he could and went home. He asked Frau Kainzenhuber, who mildly upbraided him, for some hot wine and went to bed. He slept badly; he felt feverish and limp. He decided not to get up next day. By midday his temperature was so high that Frau Kainzenhuber became anxious and called in a neighbour. It was decided to have the old gentleman taken to the hospital at Kaltenfurth, a small town near by.

One of the younger house surgeons had a taste for reading. The name Wickersberg was familiar to him. He observed the remarkable, frog-mouthed head of the sick man and was convinced that the patient and the poet were one and the same.

Next day the local paper announced that the well-known poet and writer, Robert Wickersberg, who had been taking a rest cure at Vörtschau, lay seriously ill with inflammation of the lungs in Kaltenfurth hospital; there was, however, every hope that the proven skill of the Kaltenfurth doctors would save the life of their distinguished visitor. The news appeared that evening in the Vienna press; the morning after it was known to the world.

The good people of Vörtschau instantly forgot that they had ever laughed at the peculiar old gentleman with his frog's mouth and teeth like roof-tiles. Every hotel and inn in Kaltenfurth and the parish of Vörtschau had its complement of busy journalists from Vienna, who rooted round in every corner to find out how the sick man had spent his days, whom he had talked to, and what had brought him to Vörtschau, of all places. They took up their posts in and around the little hospital, gaping for news, like the fishes at the lake's edge when visitors threw them crumbs, each one eager to be the first to give the distressing news to his paper. The doctors who were in charge of the rapidly failing man had to issue a bulletin every half-hour; the little post office requested reinforcements from Vienna. Some of the journalists were the common run of sceptical and cynical human being. Some were not unmoved when they telegraphed the news that there was now little or no prospect of the patient's recovery, and there were others who thought it quite time the old fellow made his bow.

It was a perfect early autumn. Vörtschau, which was now mentioned more frequently in the papers than other resorts, began to attract visitors. The café once again set out its tables right down to the edge of the lake; the Navigation Company brought out its second large motor-boat; and the lake was dotted with skiffs. Who would ever have

thought that the pavilion *La Gloriette* would have been so well patronized again that year? The man in shirt-sleeves pulled out the nails with which he had boarded up his hut; the instructor appeared once more at the bathing station. The affiliated musical societies of Kaltenfurth and Vörtschau joined forces in rehearsing some of the more solemn melodies of the composer Laischacher.

The manager of the Hotel Mangart was particularly in evidence. He had his second pair of striped trousers pressed with all speed, and was never tired of telling, with all the flourishes of Austrian politeness, how engrossed and how interested the Master had been by the conversations they had had, how charmed he had been by the lake, the mountains, the exhilarating air, and the hotel's excellent Austrian cuisine. He lamented and deplored in his guttural Carinthian speech the malignance of Fortune in cutting the Master off in the midst of refreshment which could nowhere be bettered. He also expatiated with feeling on the reverent eagerness with which the Master had again and again asked to be shown the manuscript of the composer Laischacher. Often, with an earnest expression on his face, sunk in meditation, he had stood for minutes together before the bronze bust of the great musician.

The gardener, too, was always ready to tell, every day with fresh details, what an interest the old gentleman had taken in his flowers; it had been easy to see that this was no common visitor, that there was something special about him. In fact, recollecting the words of one of Laischacher's songs, the gardener insisted on sending the sick man a bunch of Michaelmas daisies and his last roses. But Frau Kainzenhuber had more to say than all the rest. She offered the reporters a cup of her excellent Austrian coffee, and told them she had divined from the first moment that a great man had come to her modest but admirably kept and superior house. She had, however, been as reasonable as possible, and in spite of her conviction that coffee was more wholesome, had with particular care and with her own hands made him the tea he was so obstinately set on. All these

details were dished up again and again for the newspapers. They had to be carefully husbanded, for the patient was intolerably slow in dying; it was positively a disgrace the way he kept a man hanging about.

Meanwhile, Robert Wickersberg lay in the best room of the Kaltenfurth hospital. It was clear to him most of the time that his end had come. But he did not hurry; he was not going to be hustled. He was often delirious and saw visions of one kind or other. Once he saw the missing end of his *Asmodai* as he had seen it when the work first leapt freshly into his mind. It did not vex him that in spite of this clear vision the play would probably never be completed. On the contrary, he smiled slyly when he considered that now no producer and no company and no profiteers would scramble for it, that rather, unknown to anyone, it would slip with him from the world. His only regret was that neither would the waiter Franz know anything about it and would so keep to his mistaken opinion of Wickersberg's merit.

Wickersberg's divorced wife came. She had great expectations of this death-bed scene, but she was deceived. The poet received her with coolness and she was not received a second time. Even the reporters made little of her. Frau Wickersberg had already made a chatty and rather too outspoken book of the grievance she nursed in her heart against the poet. It was an old story; it had no news value. The newspapers were more concerned to have the observation of Frau Kainzenhuber and the manager of the hotel.

Wickersberg lay in bed feeling limp, disheartened—sometimes, too, a little cheated by God and the world. Often as the opportunities had presented themselves, he had not valued enough the charm of flirting with a woman, of showing himself with pride and scorn to an audience he had overwhelmed, of drinking good wine by the edge of a beautiful lake. Now he would not be sorry to crowd many days with such pleasures, however besotted they might be. Quite apart from *Asmodai*. How good it would be to write

it to the end! But sixty comes, and if you get so far, eighty, and even so, what is it but toil and trouble?

Then it occurred to him how it was that he had so nearly succeeded in finishing *Asmodai*. He knew of a sudden who the girl of the desert was from whom the play had caught its subdued glow. It was decades since he had seen her; perhaps she was dead long ago, but he knew exactly the turn of her head—lean and slender and a little sharp. He saw her in the long, old-fashioned blue dress she wore when he first met her at the suburban dance long ago. For he was young in those days; and although it was only in a derisive and ironical mood that he had accompanied a friend of his to that provincial entertainment, he was still a long way from the severity which cramped his later years; and he had looked at this girl in blue very much more attentively than he had at the Saxon girl Ilse.

He had not been in her company very often, and yet now in the hospital at Kaltenfurth he had a vivid memory of the large pores in her hand, of her worn brown shoes, of her rather too high-pitched voice, and of her whole slight figure, which in those days seemed to him so radiant and alert. Probably she might have been all that; but she had missed her decade, she had come too soon. A decade later she would have been sent to college or given a career of some kind. As it was she had some office job and no doubt had soured there. When he took his walk with the Saxon girl Ilse the other day, it was only because something about the carriage of her head reminded him of that thin, sharp girl. Really it was a pity he had never bothered over the girl in blue. No, it was not a pity. It would certainly have ended in a disillusionment. As it was there was that subdued glow in the desert girl of his play *Asmodai*.

It would be disgusting if strange eyes read their own vulgarity into this girl of the desert. He realized without anger how little, for example, that utterly unimaginative Ilse would make of her. He had his papers brought him. He made the nurse pick out in his presence all that belonged to *Asmodai*. Then she had to write a letter for him to the

waiter Franz Klüsgens, in the little Rhineland town, asking him on receipt of the letter to telegraph his promise that he would never say a word to anybody about the packet which Robert Wickersberg proposed to send him. Then he told her to destroy this letter and simply tie up the sheets of *Asmodai* she had picked out, seal the packet, and then write on a label: 'To be delivered after my death to Herr Franz Klüsgens, waiter at B. on the Rhine.'

Robert Wickersberg signed the label and made her promise secrecy. He no longer needed Franz's promise. He saw the broad, reliable, peasant face of the nurse, and the thought that this last success would come into the hands of Franz, the waiter, instead of into those of a rag-dealer filled him with a crafty joy. It was a time of happiness, the best time of his life, perhaps, apart from the time he had spent with the girl in the blue dress, and it was a long time, almost a quarter of an hour long. Then at last the stern and hopeless struggle for life set in.

Ilse, the Saxon girl, was put out when she learnt who it was that had swum across to the island in her honour. So the old gentleman was a great man—Robert Wickersberg, the poet; not so celebrated as a boxer or a tennis champion, but well known all the same. Actually it was for her he had died. For a whole afternoon she gave herself up to the confusion of her feelings, eating nothing, drinking nothing, seeing nothing of the young man. It saddened even more than disgusted her not to have known who Robert Wickersberg was. Probably, if she had only set her mind on it, he would have made her his mistress, or at least his wife.

The next day she came to the conclusion that to have had him die for her was really even more *chic*. She intimated this to the reporters. Very soon she was Robert Wickersberg's last love. The poet's divorced wife paled before her and a literary magazine compared the Saxon Ilse with Ulrike von Levetzow, the last love of the poet J. W. von Goethe. Her Dresden parents concluded that no resistance could now be offered to the artistic destiny of their daughter,

and Saxon Ilse, as Robert Wickersberg's last affinity, had a magnificent spring-board for her career.

The interment of the poet Wickersberg was an event whose importance recalled the interment of the composer Laischacher. Representatives of the Government, of important public bodies, and the theatrical world were there. The affiliated musical societies of Kaltenfurth and Vörtschau honoured the great man's memory by a recital of certain tender and moving songs. All the newspapers gave lengthy reports, also numerous pictures.

All this drew public attention to Vörtschau and its lake. The autumn season made an astonishing spurt. The parish council decided to put up a bust of the poet Wickersberg on the little open space at the end of the promenade, opposite the bust of their own celebrity, Laischacher.

THE POLAR EXPEDITION

A NORSE boy read when he was fourteen of the privations endured by the explorer Sir John Franklin and his comrades, who lived for weeks on end on some bones discovered in a deserted Indian camp, and finally had to devour their own boots. The ambition was kindled in him to become pre-eminent in overcoming hardships of the same kind. He was a taciturn boy. Without betraying his purpose he began to train fanatically, racking his muscles and his nerves to the utmost. Near the town where he lived there was a plateau which no living being had ever ventured across in winter. When he was twenty-one he crossed it in the month of January, only saving himself from a death of starvation by the utmost endurance, and actually being frozen fast one night in a hole in the snow which during his sleep of exhaustion sheeted him in ice.

Stubbornly and methodically he acquired all the know-

which might be needed by a Polar explorer, knowledge of the sea and of atmospheric conditions. Having passed the State examination he chose for himself the most treacherous of the seas, so as to acquire a practical knowledge of the great and small arts of navigation in sea and over ice. Tested by months of hunger, frost, and scurvy, he became a hard and silent man, whose knowledge and experience were locked up in his mind as jealously as in a bank safe: a man who had no love for others and believed in nobody but himself.

Unscrupulous in money affairs, he procured the means for a first independent expedition, and crossed a stretch of the Polar seas never explored before. It cost him three years' labour, but he conquered the north-west passage, an enterprise in which everybody before him had failed. All the world applauded his success. He himself most of all. An indefatigable trumpeter of his own deeds, he gave an exact account of how much greater his success was than that of his contemporaries and predecessors.

With the prestige of his success behind him he set out for the North Pole. But another man had got there before him. He turned right about face immediately and set out for the South Pole. But someone else was already on the way there too. A terrible race began. With cold logic the Norseman summed up all the experience stored and catalogued in his mind. Was there a defect that he could avoid in the preparations made by his rival? He found one, *the* one. The other had taken horses with him; but he would depend on the tenacity and the flesh of his dogs, which were at the same time good food and good means of transport. The other man with his ponies died on the road: the Norseman returned in triumph. He accorded his rival great praise now that he had failed and was dead. But he did not forget to tell the world distinctly that it had been his mistake in taking ponies that had been the cause of the dead man's failure. If he himself had won, it was because he had had the wit to think of dogs. His success was well-deserved, not mere luck.

Soon afterwards he had the great idea of his life; the conquest of the Pole by a new and better means of transport: the airship. The execution of this idea, the effort to secure an airship for his next Polar expedition, brought him in contact with a man of southern race. The Norseman had been made still harder, more overbearing, more morose and savagely moody by his success. His face was seamed like an old olive tree, his mouth was tightly locked. His own mother could not have maintained that he was an amiable man. There were few whom he did not regard with contempt, many whom he hated with icy fury, nobody whom he loved; and from all he demanded unconditional submission to his authority. The Latin with whom he was collaborating was his exact antithesis: amiable, pliable, light-hearted, boyishly optimistic, insensately vain in success, despairing in failure.

The vivacious and charming Latin and the stiff, morose Norseman took stock of each other. Each discovered that the other was not to his liking. Both were overflowing with mild ambition, both arrogant and unscrupulous. Even during the negotiations there were quarrels; but there was only one way to the North Pole and to fame, and that lay through the Norseman. And there was only one airship capable of reaching the North Pole, and its architect, the Latin, was master of that. The Latin had constructed the airship, and he was a good pilot. The Norseman had conquered the north-west passage, and knew the Arctic and the Antarctic seas. It was a risk for a man who had never been on snow-shoes to entrust himself to another's guidance for an expedition into the eternal ice. It was a risk for a man who had never flown to entrust himself to another's guidance for a flight into unknown wastes where the slightest error meant death. The same necessity, the same object, bound the two incompatible men together. Neither was willing to share the glory. Each hoped to snatch the other's share of it on the way thither.

And, behold, the airship reached its goal. It crossed the North Pole.

Now, which of these two could claim the success?

The Norseman had had the idea of the expedition, had made the preparations, and decided the route. He had behind him thirty years of the most strenuous and methodical Polar exploration. Six months ago the other had known nothing about the North Pole except that it was cold there. Was this mere handy man to have a share of the honour, and the greater share at that? The Norseman growled and called the other an unreliable, nervous, effeminate noodle, who childishly tried to ape the great man. The world listened to the Norseman's arguments, acknowledged their justice, and accorded him reluctant admiration. But they left it at that. They did not advance him nor did they offer him the means to achieve new deeds. Frankly, he himself made it difficult. He was pedantically precise. It was a principle with him to think out every contingency that could arise, and to eliminate chance. This was not a cheap proceeding; it was very expensive. Whatever the reason, people accorded unwilling praise to the overbearing and surly man, but not the money to set a new expedition on its legs.

The Latin had better luck. He smiled over the Norseman, the gloomy, insufferable, pathologically egoistic fool. He would monopolize the glory, would he? That was a fine joke, that was. To fly over the North Pole was clearly the pilot's achievement; any child could see that; and the Norseman knew nothing about an air engine except that it made a noise. The Latin was allowed his superior smile. He had the sympathy of the whole world, for he was a brilliant fellow.

He knew the art of shining in all sorts of situations. Because they were too heavy for the airship, he had refused to carry the Norseman's furs. But he had secretly brought his own uniform, for he was an officer in his country's army. On the border of the Arctic, when the crew descended soberly and suitably clad from the ship which they had brought back to civilization, he suddenly appeared glittering in uniform. The little girl standing in

the waiting crowd presented her bouquet not to the unpresentable and roughly clad Norseman, but to the brilliant officer.

It was not only the child's heart that he won; he kindled the hearts of all his easily inflammable countrymen. He rose rapidly, and while still young became a general. For him, since he was planning a new flight over the North Pole, his country constructed at once a new airship to his specifications, 75 feet high, 345 feet long, with 66,000 cubic feet of gas expansion, and four gondolas. The tanks accommodated oil for 75 hours. The motors were 720 horse-power. For the rest the Latin was not very thorough in his preparations. He did not study very exhaustively the scientific principles governing ice, snow, and winter. Had he not a more perfect vehicle than any which had ever started for the North Pole? A chosen crew, the best apparatus? He trusted to his luck.

Parades in his honour, bells, music. His airship rose. In three stages it reached the north. Then it set off on the final and decisive lap. By radio he acquainted the listening world that he was on the way to the North Pole. He was over Greenland, he was past Greenland. In twenty minutes, his wireless prophesied, he would be at the North Pole.

He reached the North Pole. For two hours, elated with triumph, he circled round the white and longed-for wilderness. The gramophone blared out the national anthem of his country. His national flag and a great cross consecrated by the Pope were lowered. To his King, to the Pope, to the Dictator of his country, he sent out wireless messages announcing that with God's help he had reached the North Pole. Long live his country!

In a well-equipped receiving station in his native town sat the Norseman, his eyes still stonier than usual, his tight mouth still more compressed. He listened along with the others, and shared their knowledge that his rival, that contemptible, good-for-nothing, had reached the North Pole and was circling round it admired by everyone, the darling of the world. He himself had expended countless

years of the most arduous labour, countless nights of deadly peril. Now his deeds were worthless, his fame obliterated. After the scantiest preparation the other had accomplished lightly, with the smile and bow of an actor, what he had fought a life-time to accomplish.

Ah, if the airship had belonged to him! With how much care, with what skill and method he would have fitted out the expedition! His rival was slap-dash even as a pilot. The Norseman had noticed it, he had divined it with the keen penetration of hatred. The man had undertaken his flight thoughtlessly, and it was criminal thoughtlessness in anyone to fly over that ice without knowing it intimately. But he was lucky, the other man. He had looks that pleased the mob, a splendid airship, splendid machinery. He, the Norseman, had the qualifications; the other had the airship and the luck.

He sat in the receiving station and heard everything. He was man enough to listen to the bitter end as his contemptible rival's good luck was broadcast. The wireless operator announced that they were on the way back. Everything was going smoothly, of course. Everything on board was all right. There was fog, however. More fog, a pretty thick fog. He was exaggerating a bit, no doubt, the operator. Adverse winds, bad visibility. These things don't run so smoothly as you thought, my dear young man. But you're light-hearted, you have all the blindness of irresponsibility, you're lucky. You'll come through safely all right. I'm listening along with the rest; I'm waiting until you get back. He sat and waited; he was determined to drink the bitter draught to the lees.

But what now? The difficulties were increasing. The steering-gear wasn't functioning well. The airship was driving through fog. One of the motors was out of action. The operator reported once more: all well on board. Then no further message came.

The Norseman had been sitting in the receiving station since early in the evening. Now it was almost morning, the staff were being relieved for the third time. He was

quite stiff with his vigil; he felt no hunger; he sat on, waiting for the message that the other had safely returned.

Midday came. No word. Perhaps he was lost in the fog; perhaps he had had to make a forced landing; perhaps his wireless had given out. In any case, it did not look as if the Latin would return that day. The Norseman stood up stiffly, aching from his long session, and went home.

Next day, too, the wireless was dumb. The Latin had oil for a seventy-five hours' flight. Fifty hours passed, sixty, the seventy-fifth. The airship was overdue.

Days and nights passed. The Latin remained invisible. Now among the living the Norseman was the only man who had made an expedition on an airship to the North Pole.

Days and nights passed. Then out of the void came a message from the Latin. His airship had exploded; he himself and some of his crew were drifting on an ice floe a hundred and ten miles from the North Cape.

A fever seized the whole world: was it possible to rescue the man? How long could he hold out? Would the ice break? Had he provisions? Would he founder? Ships were sent out and aeroplanes.

The Norseman's country was looking at him; all the world was looking at him. His Government asked him to go to the rescue. Who could rescue the lost men, if not he?

He was in the habit of making meticulous preparations and exhaustive calculations before seizing the propitious moment. He had to thank his far-sightedness, not his luck, for what he had hitherto achieved. Now he had to set off at a day's notice on a flying machine hastily procured and barely modified for his purpose. But he was the man; his fame imposed the obligation on him. And it would be grim triumph to rescue with his flying machine a bungler who dared to consider himself his equal, even his superior. He declared that he was ready. The cameramen snapped him as he stepped into the aeroplane, his mouth wry, his eyes hard as ever.

It was the last photograph ever taken of him. He did not rescue the other man in his aeroplane. It did not return.

It was the other man who returned.

The Latin had had a hard time. He had sat on his floating ice floe with a broken leg, confronted with imminent death, and surrounded by comrades who saw in him the source of their misfortunes. The only man among them who had any experience of Polar conditions was dead. He had set off with two others across the ice to try to reach the mainland. He had died of cold on the way; or perhaps he had died of hunger; or perhaps his comrades had eaten him; nobody knew. But what everybody did know was that the Latin had allowed himself to be rescued before his comrades; he, the captain, before his crew; and that he was to blame for the death of the Norseman and of eight other men; and that those who managed to escape owed their lives to an icebreaker belonging to a land which in culture and policy was the most bitter opponent of their own.

He had been the first to fly over the Arctic Ocean in an airship invented, constructed, and piloted by himself. Only a few weeks before, the whole world had applauded him wildly, far more than he had deserved, far more than they had ever applauded the Norseman. Now they despised him for a coward, a disgrace to his country, an absurd and exasperating fool.

The Norseman had died, died for him and because of him. He was alive; he was the only man alive who had flown over the Arctic Ocean in an airship. But the other was the great man: he, the Latin, was a ludicrous figure, and even his own country aspersed him.

VENICE

PERRY KNIGHT entered the office of the 'Atlas Travel Agency,' a rather large room with ticket windows and desks. He looked round for someone whom he could ask for the boss. He saw a card on a desk: 'Information. Miss Gloria Desmond.' Behind the desk, he saw a girl, and behind the girl, he saw a large and very colourful poster: 'Venice Wants To See You!'

At this very moment, between 9.45 and 9.46, began Perry Knight's enchantment and the history of the settlement of Venice, Texas.

Perry was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old. He wore a long, grey coat, a grey derby, laced boots, gloves, and gold cuff links. You see, we were at the turn of the century. Teddy Roosevelt was President, and there were three hundred telephones and one automobile for every thirty thousand inhabitants of the United States.

Perry walked toward the girl Gloria Desmond, his heart racing ahead of him. There she sat; her navy blue dress was fastened high at her neck, and her arms were resting comfortably on the desk top, the wide, full sleeves coming down to her wrists. She faced him with mild curiosity. He saw and felt nothing but her heart-shaped, white face with large, deep blue eyes and jet-black hair; and behind it the gaily coloured poster with the masterful call: 'Venice Wants To See You!'

His whole life up to the present moment was blotted out; Perry Knight, the clever, rising young business man, was no more; there was only Perry Knight, the Troubadour.

He pulled himself together and asked for Mr. Ferguson. "One moment, please," Gloria replied, and he didn't notice that her voice was hard and without lustre. She went inside, and the world was empty. She came back and said: "Won't

you sit down? Mr. Ferguson will see you in a minute." He sat and looked at her. He told himself that it wasn't proper to stare like that, and stared at her. She pretended to be making some notes, to be putting papers in order. Her movements were slow. Occasionally she would raise her blue eyes and look at Perry with calm curiosity. I've got him, she thought.

A buzzer sounded. "This way, sir," she said. Mechanically he followed the navy blue skirt that, gently swaying, moved before him. The skirt fitted snugly round the full hips, very tight down to the knees, then it flared, wide and bell-shaped, and its folds touched the ground. Gloria was holding it up, not gingerly with two lady-like fingers, but with her whole, firm, girlish hand. Thus, showing quite a bit of her silk petticoat, she floated ahead of the bewitched Perry into Mr. Ferguson's office.

Perry Knight was one of the partners in the firm of Sidney Browne & Company, Realtors. During the depression, that firm had bought up a lot of acreage suitable for summer resorts. Now that business was booming, they were beginning to develop those properties, and Perry had come to see Mr. Ferguson about the improvement of certain transportation facilities to one of the proposed summer resorts.

Perry Knight had been in the real estate business since his earliest youth. He managed to put his questions and give his answers almost mechanically, so that Mr. Ferguson didn't notice that it wasn't the real Perry Knight who talked to him, but only Perry's mortal frame; Perry's soul wasn't seeing summer resorts and railways and buses; it saw only deep blue eyes, a small girlish hand holding up the folds of a skirt, and snug-fitting cloth that enclosed round, swaying hips.

A deal was discussed and closed, and Mr. Ferguson accompanied his visitor to the door. Perry walked through the outer office. At her desk before the poster sat Gloria. He was drawn there. "I'd like some information about a trip to Venice, please," he said, forcing a bright smile.

"Ocean voyages, window number 4," said Gloria.

There were some people waiting at window 4. "I'm in a hurry," he said. "Could you arrange for them to send me the information?"

Gloria looked up at him with languid curiosity. I've got him hooked, she thought. "I'll have it sent to you, sir," she said.

"Can you make it to-day?" he asked, and his voice sounded almost imploring. He made a bet with himself: If she lets me leave, then my life is shot to hell. If she meets me half-way, I'll marry her.

"I'll make it to-day," Gloria said. She jotted down his address. "If necessary, I'll bring you the information myself," she promised. "We close at 6. I could be at your office at about 6.30."

From 6.15 on Perry waited in breathless suspense. By 6.35 he had given up in despair. At 6.50 she came.

His heart swelled up in his throat. She handed him the desired material. He tried to think of something that would make her stay. She didn't seem in a hurry to leave, but she wasn't very talkative either. On her deathbed, Gloria's mother had said to her: "What I'm leaving you, my child, is not money, but a piece of advice. You inherited two things from your parents: your beauty from me, and your brains, which you haven't got, from your father. Use both. Don't talk. Gaze into space, smile a lot, and say little."

Gloria took her mother's advice to heart. Nevertheless, Perry managed to learn a thing or two about her; for instance, that she was alone in the world, and that her job with Mr. Ferguson was a rather pleasant one. When he told her how well the poster behind her desk suited her, she even went so far as to make a personal remark. She said that she sometimes felt like seeing Venice herself, and that it was too bad it was so far and so expensive. And she smiled a profound and mysterious smile.

During the night Perry pondered on what had happened to him. He, a sane and sensible business man, at peace with himself and the world, with a healthy distrust for big words and big passions, had lived to learn that the so-called

'Higher Things' were not a mere fantasy of long-haired aesthetes, but that they really existed. They had materialized for him in the shape of Gloria and Venice.

For Gloria and Venice were one and the same thing. From the first moment, the poster 'Venice Wants To See You!' was an attribute of the girl Gloria, just as the helmet is an attribute of Mars, the God of War, or the goatee beard an attribute of Uncle Sam. All through the day, from 9.45, those Higher Things had worked in Perry, and now, at night, he had a brainstorm, a creative idea. A business idea, for Perry was a business man to his fingertips. The magic call: 'Venice Wants to See You!' Perry figured, was bound to have its effect on everybody; for he, Perry, was no exceptional case; he was an American like all the others, an average American of the turn of the century. Gloria was right—if all America wasn't streaming to Venice, it was only because it was too costly and took too much time. Well, he was going to act on Gloria's implication and place Venice within reach of everyone. Venice wasn't going to be far away and expensive any longer; he, Perry, was going to put Venice right into his own country, to be reached comfortably and at reasonable cost by train. He could almost see the posters from coast to coast, with Gloria's head in the foreground, calling to the nation: 'Venice, Texas, Wants To See You!'

For this, too, had been clear to him from the very first moment: the new Venice had to rise in Texas, on the land that the firm of Sidney Browne & Company, Realtors, had acquired just at the right time for only a little over 80,000 dollars.

The new Venice, the properties in Texas, the big business deal—all that floated before him in the form of Gloria, in the form of the navy blue, smooth and attractively tight skirt which had floated in front of him through the office of the Atlas Travel Agency that morning.

Thus, filled with pleasant dreams and self-confidence, Perry went to sleep.

* * * * *

When he told the idea to Sidney Browne, his partner, Sidney declared he was crazy.

It was after dinner, and they were sitting in Sidney's parlour. There were three of them, for Sidney's daughter, Kathleen, was with them.

Sidney, a cautious and deliberate man of close to fifty, liked Perry very much. He knew that such fantastic talk was not Perry's habit. "You're kidding me, aren't you?" Sidney said.

"So you don't want to be in on it when I build my Venice?" Perry asked. His apple-cheeked face narrowed and assumed the determined expression it always assumed during important business conferences.

Surprised, almost annoyed, Sidney turned to his daughter: "I'd like to know," he declared, "what on earth's got into Perry? His father was a respectable lumber dealer."

"I don't think," Kathleen replied in her quiet voice, "you should dismiss Perry's idea so lightly." She was a tall, healthy girl with a friendly, resolute face, a strong chin, and big teeth.

Sidney Browne had respect for his daughter's judgment. "You too, Kathleen?" he asked. "I guess I'm getting behind the times."

"The name 'Venice'," Kathleen justified her opinion, "is pleasant to the ear. It has appeal."

"Venice, Texas, Inc.," Perry said dreamily, "it just melts on your tongue. Kathleen is right. It makes your mouth water." And he thought of Gloria.

"Just how do you figure this thing?" Sidney muttered. "Where'll you get the money? The railroad people and the banks will have you swallowed up even before you get started." Then it came out that Perry wasn't thinking of the banks and the railway companies to finance the project, but of Oliver Brent.

Oliver Brent was crazy about Europe. He spent most of his time there in refined idleness. He was wealthy and had, on several occasions, playfully invested money in the firm of Sidney Browne & Company, Realtors. It was entirely

possible that he could be had for a scheme like 'Venice, Texas, Inc.'

"If one sent him some estimates that made sense," Kathleen suggested, "he might risk the money."

"You've got to be awfully careful," Perry said, "or people will steal the idea right from under your nose."

"You don't think much of your idea, do you?" Sidney asked sarcastically.

For a moment Perry struggled with himself. It was not his idea at all, it was Gloria's. He couldn't deny Gloria; he had to own up to her. He had to tell them that he intended to marry her. They would be surprised, and not pleased—but it would be infamous and cowardly not to stand up for Gloria and Higher Things. "The idea isn't mine at all," he confessed bravely. "It comes from a young lady-friend of mine." And as the two looked up at him, he went on: "Her name's Gloria Desmond. By the way, I'm going to marry her."

"That's a lot of news for one evening," Sidney said.

Kathleen sat there, startled, and there was disappointment on her large honest face. She liked Perry very much, and had always figured that some day he would propose to her. His announcement made something die in her, but she kept a stiff upper lip. "When are we going to meet your fiancée, Perry?" she asked.

"Any time you like," Perry said.

Then they spoke of Venice, Texas, again, and discussed the technical details of the scheme.

Gloria was not particularly surprised when Perry asked her to marry him. She merely smiled sweetly and a little mysteriously, and said yes. Nor was she surprised when he told her that he was going to build a Venice that would not be too distant and too expensive. "That's very nice of you, Perry," she said with her lovely smile and her hard voice.

Sidney and Kathleen didn't like Gloria very much. In

fact they didn't like her at all. But they were polite and well bred, and true friends of Perry's. So they praised Gloria's good looks. As a wedding present, Kathleen gave the young couple an oil painting and a bronze statuette, and Sidney Browne presented them with a tandem bicycle and a vase with artificial flowers.

In the meantime, Oliver Brent's answer had arrived. He wrote that he thought the idea excellent because it was so clumsy and absurd, and also that with Sidney and Perry it was in the best of hands. For these reasons, he was willing to finance it. They read the letter with mixed feelings; but, in any case, they had the capital.

They went ahead with the building of Venice, Texas, with great energy. Perry was in charge; he handled the publicity and the negotiations with the railway and steamship companies. Sidney's job was the contracting and building; Kathleen supervised the artistic and cultural aspects of the project.

Venice, Texas, was to be the cultural centre of the south-west. Fifteen miles of canals were dug; a St. Mark's Square with colonnades was built; Renaissance palaces and arched bridges were erected. True enough, the palaces were little more than fronts made of wood and stucco; but to make up for it, they built a theatre in which one could actually sit. They also built a concert hall and an 'Academy' for a permanent art exhibition.

Sidney Browne kept grumbling that 'culture' was eating up the greater part of the budget. Perry too had his doubts whether culture would pay. But after all, the whole idea had originated in his yearning for Higher Things, and he had to own up to that desire wholeheartedly.

"Listen, Gloria," he said, "I'm worried about our Venice. What should it be—Accent on Comfort, or Accent on Culture?"

"Yes, dear," Gloria answered, "Accent on whatever you think is Right."

Rome wasn't built in a year, but Venice, Texas, was. Before the year was out, water flowed through the canals,

the bridges arched over them, the palaces stood, tame pigeons flew over St. Mark's Square. The whole affair was gay and colourful with its many flags and pennants, just as Perry had envisaged it, and very similar to that poster. Here and there Sidney had thrown in small bungalows with all modern conveniences. There were streets running behind and between the palaces, because they wanted to give the visitors the opportunity to cross Venice not only in gondolas but also on wheels, namely in the small, canvas-topped, horse-drawn buggies characteristic of the south-west. The artists, those long-haired fellows, had objected and talked drivel about unity of style and similar nonsense. The founders, however, agreed that what they had created was a good and substantial Venice, just the right Venice for the time and the place.

The Venetians that peopled this place were of unquestionable authenticity and substance. It could no longer be determined exactly whose idea it had been to bring them over. Due to the fact that Gloria had once dropped a chance remark to the effect that one ought to import a real French milliner, Perry later claimed that the suggestion came from her. In any case, they had procured genuine Italians, gondoliers, street musicians, roast chestnut vendors, ice-cream makers, glass blowers. It was Oliver Brent who had got them; he had sent over a shipload of hand-picked and assorted Venetians from Venice, Italy.

There were about a hundred of them, but they brought with them, these Beppos and Girolamos and Pietros and Olimpias and Teresas, life and vitality enough for a thousand. For not only did they steer their gondolas with those long poles through the artificial canals and play barcaroles and dance tarantellas and make *salami* and ice-cream and blow glass, but they were also all over the settlement, everywhere at the same time, more colourful than the colour of the palaces; they were a swarming, teeming, noise-making, gesticulating, singing, shouting, fighting lot. Their children and their small donkeys kept bawling and braying; it was awful and it was wonderful.

Two stood out from the crowd. One was the painter Enrico Calla, a stocky, red-haired fellow, young and strong. He was always storming against all conventional art. He was a modernist, a naturalist, and, according to him, true art started with him. Incidentally, there were many who believed in him in Paris, in Rome, and in Venice. Calla had accepted Oliver Brent's offer to go to Venice, Texas, because he felt that his talent could develop more freely in that young country than in the old Europe where art was poisoned by prejudices. Now he got a kick out of poking fun at both the old and new Venice. He wanted people to get the kind of Venice they liked.

But the leader of the whole group of Italians was the Marquis Paolo Orsoni. He was a genuine marquis, a tall, thin gentleman in his late forties, dark, with hollow temples, a strong, bony nose, and sharp, clear grey eyes under bushy brows. His family had given Venice two doges, and he himself was surrounded by an aura of history; he looked a bit shaky and very aristocratic. He was charming; he amused the men by telling *risqué* anecdotes, and delighted the ladies by being discreetly immoral and depraved, and by always gazing at them with languid, impertinent, and boundless admiration. With a few words and gestures, he could awake the association of Venice in those who had never been there and sometimes even in those who had. He had gladly accepted Oliver Brent's offer to come over. His forefathers had been *condottieri*, generals, and mercenaries who had conquered Crete and Cyprus. Now there was nothing left to conquer in Europe; there was no longer room in the Old World for a man of the Renaissance like him. He had therefore welcomed the opportunity to try his talents in the wide open spaces of the United States.

Perry Knight had done some clever publicity work. People actually came. The depression and the war were followed by boom times; people were making money, and were spending it. The man who could not afford a trip to

Europe at least wanted to tell his friends: "I've been to Venice, Texas."

And so people came to have a look at the new cultural centre. They walked through the art exhibition; they sat through a concert or took part in a conducted tour. The concerts were good, and so were the lectures and the art. The visitors, however, refused to warm up to them. The whole cultural centre only filled them with cold respect. There was no enthusiasm whatever.

Perry, Sidney, and Kathleen realized with growing concern that the fish weren't biting. They had invested a lot of money in Art and Culture. They were forced to charge high prices, and people wouldn't pay them. They had miscalculated.

Kathleen felt responsible for the failure culture turned out to be. In spite of her serene temper, she could no longer sleep peacefully at night. Again and again she would discuss the possible reasons for this fiasco with Calla, the painter.

She had made friends with Calla. The painter behaved in America exactly the way he had behaved in the Old World. With his shirt open over his hairy chest, he hung out at the saloons, drinking, singing, shouting. He was hail-fellow-well-met who would gamble and get into mischief with anybody. He painted, too. People didn't know just what to think of his paintings. If they didn't praise him highly enough, he would abuse them mercilessly. Kathleen, however, sensed that behind his uncouth behaviour there was a sincere devotion to art.

With her he acted less presumptuously. He told her of the things that troubled him. Unquestionably the snobbish art of the Old World was nothing but sugar-coated muck, but when one had to create everything anew out of oneself alone, one couldn't make much headway either. Grimly he made fun of her efforts to give people art. "They don't want art," he argued heatedly. "They refuse to swallow it. They run every time they smell art from afar." But Kathleen remained stubborn. She had taken it upon herself to sell them art, and she refused to give up so easily.

Perry proved himself even more stubborn. He, the experienced salesman, saw more clearly than the others that his dreams of a paying Culture Town had been a miscalculation. But he had sworn allegiance to the banner of Higher Things, and he would not turn traitor to them. He would never quit.

He acted cocky and confident, and ridiculed the doubts of the other two. But at night he worried himself sick and wondered how much longer they could keep their Venice going.

His married life, too, was not altogether cloudless. Not that there were any disagreements between him and Gloria. She always showed the same languid and irreproachable friendliness toward him. With her round hips enclosed in snug-fitting cloth, she walked by his side; her face rose, white and heart-shaped, from the tight collar held up by whalebones; rakishly and with a tiny veil attached to it, the little straw hat perched on her black hair. It felt good to him just to know that she was his. He was proud of her when she sat behind him on their tandem, with a tennis racket pressed under her arm, or when she made her entrance into the concert hall, dressed in a formal evening gown with a long, sweeping train. His heart pounded when he knew her to be in bed, waiting for him.

He never forgot that it was she who had inspired him; and now as ever he revered her wordless and mysterious smile. I wonder just what her smile means? he would sometimes ask himself. I wonder what she is thinking? She thought: Cheese. Once when she was being photographed, she was told: "Say 'cheese'. That's the best way to get a beautiful smile." Ever since she thought Cheese in order to achieve her smile. Perry, however, saw only the beauty and the mystery of her smile, and whenever he was successful, he felt he owed it to her, and whenever he failed, it was because he had misunderstood her or had made a mistake of his own. So all was well with him and Gloria.

Except one thing: her friendship with Marquis Orsoni. For Gloria made no secret of the fact that she enjoyed the

company of this descendant of doges and conquerors. They would glide through the canals and over the lagoon in a gondola, and while the gondolier sang in dulcet tones, the Marquis would talk to Gloria in his hollow, aristocratic voice, and she would smile sweetly and mysteriously. But Perry was firmly convinced that there was nothing between the two that was in any way improper; still, when he saw Gloria in the company of the wop nobleman, his face would assume that hard expression which it always assumed when difficult business problems had to be dealt with.

Then something unexpected happened.

If Venice failed as a cultural centre, it was all the more of a success as a pleasure town. People particularly enjoyed the variety of its well-kept beach, the 'Lido.' They waded in the ocean; the men in their striped bathing outfits that covered them from the neck to the knees, the women with cloth caps on their heads and dressed in long, bagging bathing suits which, when they got wet, clung to their bodies the more revealingly. On the yellow-white sand, the Beppos and Girolamos hawked their wares and played their mandolins; children rode their donkeys; there was always a great deal of noise and to-do. There were side-shows, merry-go-rounds, and wax-works; there were trick staircases with spots where the long skirts and petticoats of the women were suddenly blown high, so that one could see the legs of the shrieking fun-seekers all the way up to their garters. There were less harmless amusements too: gambling halls, girls waiting for company.

Behind all this stood, resplendent in stucco and wood, Venice. Filled with voluptuous nostalgia, the barcaroles ebbed and flowed; the giant figures and gargoyles of the carnival, which was being celebrated all the year around, rode and stalked grotesquely in the streets; and the strong and pungent smell of *salami* and Gorgonzola filled the air. Native songs like 'Way Down South Where I Was Born' and 'I Owe Ten Dollars to O'Grady' mingled agreeably with Italian tunes like 'O Sole Mio' and 'Santa Lucia.'

And the *Asti Spumante* tasted good with hot dogs in the moonlight—the silver light of the real one and the blue light of the many artificial ones.

Yes, sir, this was what their hearts had desired when all these good people had started out on their pilgrimage to Venice. This was what they had been dreaming about. For this they were happy to pay.

For this, yes. But not for Art and Culture.

Sidney Browne, who had had a healthy distrust of the project from the very start, now became insistent. Things simply couldn't go on like this. Culture was a bust. Culture was a total loss any way you looked at it. They had to put a stop to Culture, once and for all.

He was right, of course. And to tell the truth, Perry, too, felt more at home at the Lido. Nevertheless, he didn't want to give up the Venice of his dreams; he didn't want it to be pushed aside by a Venice of side-shows and a Lido. He felt that by giving it up he would be giving up his better self, Gloria, and Higher Things. Kathleen resisted even more. She, too, refused to realize that the bitter, cynical painter Calla had prophesied correctly.

They finally agreed to make a last attempt. They decided to invest a large sum in one more artistic venture. If that failed, too, then they would liquidate Venice as a cultural centre.

That year Sarah Bernhardt was playing in New York. "The Divine Sarah," the Marquis said, kissing his fingertips. They invited her to appear in Venice. She wasn't cheap; she pretended reluctance, but finally she consented to come. Perry was surprised to the point of embarrassment, when there arrived a gaunt, elderly lady who spoke clipped French and became very annoyed when people didn't understand her. Then she played. She played *Camille*, in French. The audience sat and listened respectfully and rather at a loss. Many left before the play was over, but most of them stayed because they had paid a pretty stiff price for their tickets. To Perry it seemed undignified that this old lady should pretend to be a young and beautiful girl with

whom the whole world was in love; he couldn't understand how that could be Art. The Marquis tried to explain it to him, but Perry clung to his opinion that the whole thing was preposterous. Gloria, however, understood the Marquis and Art, and looked at her husband in mild surprise and disapproval. It was the first time that this had happened, and Perry was duly ashamed of his uncouthness.

Well, this last attempt at Art proved to be a failure, too. That settled it; they must do a complete about-face, they must abandon Culture, and keep Venice going exclusively as a summer resort and pleasure town.

Presently came another surprise.

The merchants and the side-show people of the Lido had obtained their concessions for years ahead at amazingly low rates, and had insured themselves against competitors by means of iron-clad contracts. They were skimming off the cream of the profits, leaving practically nothing for Perry and Sidney.

These unfortunate contracts had been issued by the Marquis Orsoni. He had been appointed a kind of resort manager with full powers to organize the Pleasure Town and the Lido. Now nearly all of the concessions were in the hands of his countrymen.

He was asked to explain. He acted cool and superior; when he took over the Lido, he said, there was nothing there but sand and water. Who could have foreseen that his department would develop so favourably while all the others failed?

Perry and Sidney conducted a thorough investigation. They discovered that the Marquis was collecting a tax from everyone in Pleasure Town, all the way down to the girls desirous of company. The whole thing was cleverly organized so that you couldn't touch the Marquis. The Lido people were backing him up. They were obliging and naïve and voluble, these Beppos and Girolamos and Teresas, and you couldn't get a thing out of them.

They liked it here in Texas very much, these colourful people. There were some that were planning to return home,

and others that intended to stay. But they all stuck together and refused to implicate the Marquis. Private detectives were hired to watch them; promises and threats were tried. To no avail. As matters stood, Perry and Sidney would have been working more for the Marquis than for themselves if they had gone on and developed Venice into a first-class pleasure town.

At this point, the painter Calla came to see Kathleen. He heartily disliked the haughty Marquis, and he told her why his countrymen refused so stubbornly to talk. A kind of ring, a Mafia, existed among them, especially dangerous because of its mother organization in their home country. Those people were afraid that, if they testified against the Marquis, their relatives across the ocean would be made to pay for it.

Venice, Texas, Inc., deliberated. The Marquis' rule over the Lido was founded upon an organization across the sea. That was where they had to strike if they wanted to get at him.

So they wrote to Oliver Brent.

It so happened that Oliver Brent had time on his hands. Why not have some fun and take a look at Venice, Texas? Why not go and see his old pal the Marquis again? He was holding some trump cards against him. So Oliver Brent came over to put things right.

Oliver Brent was a gentleman in his middle thirties. He was lanky and elegant, good looking and well mannered. Like many another wealthy young man of his time, his philosophy of life was to get as much pleasure out of it as possible. "People toil," he would say, "cutting down trees; others breed animals, skin and tan them; carpenters, tanners, upholsterers, and a lot of other craftsmen work together until finally a club chair is born. There's got to be somebody to sit in that chair, and to enjoy it. That's me."

Well, Oliver Brent came, saw, and chuckled. This was exactly the way he had pictured Venice, Texas.

Then he discussed the business situation with Perry and

Sidney. It was evident that two things had to be done: more capital invested, and the Marquis' control broken.

Actually, Oliver had had his fun with Venice, Texas, and didn't feel like putting more money into the thing. But he didn't want to tell that to the others in so many words. Therefore he announced that he'd think it over. As for the Marquis, Oliver had been wanting to pay him back for a long time. He assured his partners that he would gladly rid Venice, Texas, of that dangerous character.

Oliver liked the Marquis very much. Orsoni had been his teacher in many aspects of refined enjoyment of life. But he had been an expensive teacher. That was why Oliver had shipped him off to America after paying his debts for positively the last time. And now the Marquis was up to his old tricks again. But, dammit, Oliver Brent was no sucker. If there was to be any tricking, he would do it. His Excellency was going to find that out right now.

As the two gentlemen were kindly disposed toward each other and knew one another well, they had a most amicable heart-to-heart talk. They sat there, smoking, their legs crossed.

"You are very charming, Marquis, you are the most charming crook I've ever met," Oliver remarked pleasantly. "They way you got Venice, Inc., all sewed up is truly admirable. You didn't leave us one single loophole."

"I did make a pretty good job of it, didn't I?" the Marquis replied with modest pride.

"Now that you're in the chips, old boy," Oliver suggested, "how about buying the Palazzo Orsoni back from me?"

"I wouldn't know what to do with it," the Marquis replied.

"Come, come, pal," said Oliver, "remember the big fuss when you sold me your ancestral home? To mend your broken heart, you charged me 100,000 lire extra."

"My heart's mended now," announced the Marquis.

"The Palazzo turned out to be pretty dilapidated," Oliver added.

"But it is steeped in history," replied the Marquis.

"By the way," Oliver asked suddenly, "have you managed to get rid of those laces you tried to palm off on me?"

"No," the Marquis reported sadly. "They don't trust the word of a nobleman in these parts. I have made the most impressive statement that, according to oral tradition in our family, Caterina Cornaro in person presented the laces to my illustrious ancestor Beatrice Orsoni in return for a great service rendered her. I even had that statement notarized. People wanted to buy the affidavit, but not the laces."

Oliver pondered. "Why didn't you," he asked, "pay duty on the full value of those laces when you entered this country? People here would have considered that proof of its genuineness."

The Marquis was provoked. "I'm no fool," he protested.

"But neither are you the sly fox I thought you were," said Oliver pleasantly and almost regretfully. "For you see I'm holding a royal flush." The Marquis didn't understand. Oliver explained: "Since, according to your own deposition, you believed in the authenticity of your laces, you should have paid import duty on it. We are pretty tough about these things in this country."

"But that's a lot of nonsense," the Marquis declared heatedly. "The laces are worthless trash."

"Laces," Oliver insisted, "which the Marquis Orsoni swears one of his ancestors received from Caterina Cornaro, are not worthless trash. You can't tell a story like that to the customs officers, you know."

"But who can prove that I actually believed in the genuineness of the laces?" the Marquis defended himself.

"I can," said Oliver pleasantly. "You gave me a sworn statement, too. Here it is."

The Marquis' cigarette had gone out. But after a few moment he pulled himself together. "I underrated you, Oliver," he said appreciatively, and lit another cigarette. "Well, what do you want me to do?" he asked.

"Nothing," Oliver declared, "except that you leave my boys here alone, and quit your Lido racket. You see, I want to take you along now that I'm going back. I'd like to have you with me in Europe again. I missed you, my dear Marquis, and now I know you well enough to enjoy your company without having to pay through the nose." The two gentlemen, as good friends, agreed quickly.

Oliver had been in Venice for several days. He was planning to leave the day after next. He had not seen Gloria yet; she had been 'indisposed.' She had had a cold, and when she wasn't in top form, she would never see anybody except Perry.

By now, however, she had fully recovered, and was giving a party in honour of Mr. Brent.

Oliver's gondola landed at the fake marble staircase in front of Perry's fake marble palace. Smiling, Oliver got out and mounted the stairs.

He saw Gloria. She sat there, dressed in a gorgeous green evening gown with an elaborate train. Her deep blue eyes under her jet-black hair met his gaze with impassive curiosity, and on her large and beautiful mouth there was a profound and mysterious smile. She thought: Cheese. But there was no longer a smile on Oliver's lips. The little wrinkles round his grey eyes smoothed out, he stopped slouching. I've got him, Gloria thought.

The Marquis, on the other hand, couldn't help wondering why Gloria paid so little attention to him that evening. But that changed when he told her that his work here in Venice was finished, that Oliver's appearance had reawakened his yearning for the palace of his forefathers and for the Old World, and that he intended to leave with Oliver the day after next—for ever. Gloria became thoughtful. So thoughtful that she stopped smiling. Yes, she even spoke. "Too bad," she uttered.

For the rest of the evening, she again gave half of her attention to Oliver Brent; more than half perhaps. Perry noticed it; Perry thought of the Marquis' leaving the country

the day after next. Perry mentally rubbed his hands, his face beaming as it did after a successful business deal.

When saying good night, however, Oliver announced that he intended to stay on a little longer after all—perhaps a week or so. He had decided to have his yacht come to pick him up and take him to New York.

During that week, Gloria gave a third of her time to the Marquis, and two-thirds to Oliver Brent.

The announcement that the Marquis was resigning from the management of the Lido, and was leaving the country, caused great changes in the Italian colony. In spite of the oppressive rule of the Marquis, many had already decided to make Venice, Texas, their permanent home; marriages had taken place between Venetians and natives, and the children who had come over spoke English better than Italian. When it was learned that the Lido was to be managed by Perry and Sidney alone, without the Marquis, suddenly almost all of them determined to settle permanently.

Oliver's presence had also made the painter Calla stop and think. Oliver had looked his paintings over, had listened patiently to his abuse, then had patted his shoulder and passed judgment: "Completely crazy. Just keep it up."

But Enrico Calla was not willing to 'just keep it up.' No, he wanted to go back to Europe. His agreement with Oliver Brent provided for a monthly allowance during his stay in America, in return for which everything he painted was Oliver's property. He wasn't going to be patronized and patted on the shoulder by that Brent fellow any longer. He was getting sick of being exploited by a snob who wanted to get not only fun and enjoyment out of his fellow-men, but profit too.

This, however, was only the outward reason for Calla's decision. To Kathleen, he confided his true motive: there was really nothing left for him to do over here. The 'new' had turned out to be entirely different from the way he had imagined it. This continent, he explained, was not yet ready to produce art; it was not only physically but also spiritually too big and too empty. And yet something had come of

his trip. Everything was so much more powerful here than over there, and he believed that he, too, had acquired some of that strength. Now he could go on building on the 'old' without danger of becoming conventional. And there was another thing that had come of his visit—well, wouldn't she like to go to Europe with him? Anyway, that was the other thing.

In Kathleen's big, honest face there was joy, regret, struggle. This Enrico fellow was full of life, and he was a real artist. When he explained things to her, she didn't mind his uncouth manner and his abusive ways; she realized that those Higher Things were extremely difficult to grasp, but once grasped they would enrich one's life beyond words. Anyway, the temptation was great to say: "Yes, Enrico, I'll go with you."

But she thought of Perry. Perry wasn't going to have an easy time of it, giving up Higher Things for the Lido like that. It wouldn't be right for a friend to leave Perry alone now—or as good as alone—for Gloria was hardly the ideal companion for a man in a bad spot.

"I'm proud and flattered, Enrico," Kathleen finally said, "that you want to take me with you. But I belong here, just as you belong over there." Calla ranted and raved and swore and called her asinine and idiotic, called the whole country asinine and idiotic, but she clung to her decision.

Then the yacht arrived. Oliver departed without having given a definite answer whether or not he would invest more money in Venice, Texas. The Marquis and Calla left with him. Perry and Sidney saw the gentlemen aboard ship.

When Perry returned home, he discovered that Gloria had gone, too. She had left a message, brief as always: 'Good-bye for ever.'

Perry stared at the three words. He saw Gloria the way she had moved before him that day at the Atlas Travel Agency. The navy blue skirt was tight round her hips, her firm, girlish hand was holding up the wide folds. Thus she floated before him. She floated, becoming smaller and smaller while he stood there, unable to follow her. She

floated away. He stood there for a long time, before the broken pieces of his shattered dream.

Presently a letter came from a New York attorney concerning the formalities of the divorce. Mrs. Gloria Knight, the communication read, was going to sail to Europe on the *Manhattan*. The same mail also brought a letter from Oliver Brent. He announced that he was going to take the *Manhattan* to Europe, and that he was willing to invest the needed sum in Venice, Texas.

"Thanks for nothing," Perry said grimly. He wouldn't think of taking the money. Gloria wasn't for sale.

But if they didn't take Oliver's money, Sidney's capital would be lost too.

For three days, Perry moped about, silent and sullen, without telling the others about Oliver's offer.

Then he talked to Kathleen. She agreed with him that he must not accept the money. "But what about your father?" Perry said gloomily. "He'll insist that we take it."

Kathleen pondered. Then, with sudden decision, she suggested: "We just won't tell him anything about it."

Perry was startled. "Do you know," asked, "that that would be decidedly unfair?"

"I know," said Kathleen.

"Do you know," Perry insisted, "that it would be almost criminal?"

"I know," said Kathleen. He looked at her searchingly. She returned his gaze.

"You're a great girl, Kathleen," he burst out and slapped her on the back.

"Can the sentiment," she said. "We've got work to do. We've got to pack up and pull out. Venice has got to be liquidated."

"What?" Perry asked, horrified. "Liquidated? I wouldn't dream of liquidating Venice," he declared defiantly. "I'm going to keep Venice."

"Are you crazy?" Kathleen asked no less vehemently. "Where do you propose to get the money?"

"I'll get the money," Perry retorted grimly. "I won't

give up Venice even if it costs me the last shirt off my back."

"What's your Venice anyway," Kathleen mocked. "Hot dogs and barcaroles. That's all it is."

"Don't you belittle my Venice," Perry countered furiously. "There it is, it's my Venice, and I won't give it up."

"Your Venice?" Kathleen taunted him, getting truculent too. "Your Venice? You mean Gloria's Venice. You said so yourself. A hundred times."

"Just the same, I won't give it up," Perry reiterated. "I'm sticking to it. Even without Gloria. More so than ever." He was talking himself into a rage. "I'll show them."

Kathleen gazed at his face, which had become hard and narrow. "You're a damned stubborn fellow, Perry," she said. "So damned stubborn that it's almost stupid." But all the hardness had gone out of her face, and there was a strange lift in her voice.

Perry couldn't quite make out if what she had said was approval or mockery. But he liked her this way. "All right, so I'm stupid," he answered, but with much less violence. "My grandfather used to say: 'A man who isn't handsome at twenty, not strong at thirty, not smart at forty, and not rich at fifty, never will be.' I have some time left to get smart, and more yet to become wealthy." Kathleen laughed, and Perry went on: "It'll be a heck of a job. It would be a lot easier for two. How about it, Kathleen?" He took her hand in his.

She didn't draw it away. "Do you really think it'll work out, Perry?" she asked. "Now that you have no inspiration any longer?" And again there was that strange lift in her voice.

"Nonsense," Perry declared firmly. "There may be women in whose presence you get inspiration, but when you need them they're not around. That's not the right thing. A woman's got to be the kind that's necessary to a man."

"Necessary and nothing more?" Kathleen asked.

"Oh well," Perry said impatiently. "I'm not much at

philosophy. But I don't need philosophy to know that we belong together, you and I. Will you help me?" he asked again, almost masterfully, his face narrow and tense, as it was during difficult business conferences.

And Kathleen answered: "Of course I will, silly. You could have had it sooner and cheaper, you know."

They agreed to get married as soon as his divorce from Gloria became final. From that day on, Perry rode the tandem with Kathleen.

They kept Oliver's offer a secret from Sidney. They borrowed the necessary money at a murderous rate of interest, and bought the concessions back from the Italians. They increased the number of amusement places, and built small, cosy houses for holidaymakers.

It was hard work, but within a year they had reached the first stage, as planned. The cultural centre of Venice, Texas, was being replaced by Venice, Texas, 'Town of Beauty and Pleasure.'

For the second year, they had planned to build a gambling casino. Their agreement with the contractors contained an option to that effect, and the conditions were most advantageous. But the Town of Beauty and Pleasure was just barely keeping itself above water, and it was extremely risky to incur new obligations.

When the deadline for exercising the option was approaching, Perry turned to Kathleen for advice. "Shall I take the plunge?" he asked. "Shall I build the Casino?"

Kathleen was non-committal. "You know how lucky you are," she answered.

Perry took up the option and signed.

They started excavating for the foundations of the Casino. One large payment became due, then the second. Perry didn't sleep much during those nights.

Presently they came upon water that was strangely iridescent, and had a peculiar odour. Perry became excited, but he didn't tell the others anything. He consulted experts. He slept even worse than before. They drilled and found oil. They found oil all round.

Perry beamed at Kathleen. "You gave me the idea," he said gratefully. "You told me to trust my luck."

The oil swept away Venice, Texas, the Town of Beauty and Pleasure.

The rich Perry, however, still remembered the poster: 'Venice Wants To See You!' So he went to Venice, Italy with Kathleen.

At the Hotel Danieli, the porter asked them if they would like to hire a guide who was a little expensive but very interesting: a certain Marquis Orsoni. He was a real Marquis, the porter said; his family had given Venice two doges. He also strongly advised them to have lunch at the *trattoria* which this Marquis was running; the Marquise Gloria, he added, spoke excellent English.

But Mr. and Mrs. Perry Knight saw the sights of Venice without a guide. Perry wore checked plus fours, a checked travelling cap, and carried a Scotch rug. He had a pair of binoculars on a strap round his neck, and a Baedeker stuck in his coat pocket. Kathleen wore a checked suit, too, and a straw hat, and the wind played with her veil.

They passed the Renaissance palaces that had been built, of real marble, during the real Renaissance. Everything was wonderful but much more sombre and gloomy than they had imagined it, and more deserted. It was decaying, almost shabby grandeur.

Kathleen was deeply moved.

But the city gave Perry the creeps. He moped about broodingly, and on the fourth day he said to Kathleen: "If it's all right with you, honey, we'll leave to-morrow. All this is monumental and grand, I admit, but I don't like it. The place is getting me down." As she seemed surprised, he explained: "Everything is so lazy and dead here. This is a city of loafers. I can't stand it. I want to go home. I got a great idea," he confided in her. "I'll get out of the oil business and get into real estate again. But I won't build any more Venices or Sevillas. I'll build real summer resorts for real people of to-day and to-morrow. And do you know

whom I'll get to help me plan them? Calla, the painter. He was a crazy guy all right, but he had some pretty sound ideas. He's got what we can use in Europe. He deserves to be an American."

"This is a lot of news for one night," Kathleen said just the way her father had said it years ago. She would have liked to stay in Venice a little longer, but she gave in to him. She realized that his enchantment was over for ever. And she was pleased with his push and energy.

On the voyage home, while they were walking the deck and looking out on the grey-green sea, Perry put his impressions into words. "Venice, Texas, had tempo, and Venice, Italy, has grandeur. But the most beautiful Venice is still that poster at the Atlas Travel Agency."

Kathleen stopped and looked at him. On her face there was again that faint, feminine expression of mockery. "Did you find it out at last?" she said. "Well, you're close to forty, and getting smart, I guess."

Perry laughed. "But that we two belong together, I found out at thirty," he replied.

They resumed their walk. Perry was glad that the boat was carrying him nearer home and business at fifteen miles an hour.

ODYSSEUS AND THE SWINE

or

UNWELCOME CIVILIZATION

I

SING me, O Muse, the second voyage of Odysseus, the thirsty for knowledge, to the land of the Phaeacians; for of this the poet has told us nothing.

But the illustrious Odysseus, the travel-worn sufferer, craftiest of men, stood then on the threshold of old age. Three and thirty years he had counted when he set forth for Troy; half a score of years he had lain before Troy; other ten he had drifted over the seas. Seven more years had passed since he had slain the wooers who beset his wife, noble Penelope, in their pride, and devoured his substance. But he had killed them all, not staying to measure the guilt, greater or smaller, and had sent their dismal souls down to Hades.

Sixty years Odysseus counted now. Slowly his strong shoulders were stooping, the flesh grew fat upon his bones, no longer did his eyes flash as of yore. Some of his teeth were broken, standing dull and blackened in his mouth; others he had quite lost; and often he was at a loss to tear the juicy flesh of sheep or ox from the bone with his teeth. And if now he had striven to draw the mighty bow with which once he had laid low the dog-like wooers, surely the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, must have added her sinews to his.

But of this he seldom thought. And if now and then some despite at vanishing manhood beset his soul, he thrust it aside, rejoicing rather in the abundance of riches, power, and other gifts that the gods had bestowed on him.

For among the kings of the seven isles he was now the richest. Though Ithaca was small and mountainous, not fitting for horses to graze upon, and though her people were less skilled in driving ships upon the deep than the men of other isles, yet he had great store of goats, cattle and swine. Odysseus possessed twenty great herds upon the isle, other two upon the isle of Same, and four upon the mainland. And in the nether vaults of his stately house he had treasures of every kind, splendidly enbroidered stuffs, statues of bronze, fair utensils of copper and even of gold. And many strong menservants waited upon him, and numerous maidservants. And the fierceness and violence with which he had chastised the presumptuous wooers still gained him fear and power among the men of the isle, and far beyond its shores.

Yet it was not as it had been in Ithaca, it was not as it had been in any of the seven isles. When they had gone forth to destroy sacred Ilium, all men had hearkened to the words beloved of Agamemnon, king of men, the abjectly slain: 'Let one man be above all others, let one be lord of all and king among all.' But now a softer, more weakling, less heroic time had come. The men of the isle made bold to think for themselves, to speak their own minds. Nay, there were those who grumbled, saying that if the isle lacked for strong men, the goodly Odysseus was at fault: first he had taken their fair youths, the marrow of the land, into the field before Troy, and not one had he brought back; and when a new generation had grown, the wooers, them too he had sent into Hades. Then Odysseus of many counsels was fain to lift his arm and smite the grumbler upon the back or skull with his sceptre.

Not even his own son, the wise youth Telemachus, was altogether as Odysseus would have had him; indeed, he was older than Odysseus saw him. He did as his father bade him, nor allowed refusal to pass his lips. But in his far travels Odysseus had learned to know the minds of men; he saw that his son often had opinions of his own, and this grieved him. Even his wife, noble Penelope, kept back

certain memories and feelings that she must have carried in her heart. For surely during the long years when he was afar she must have looked upon the wooers and pondered whom she should choose if he remained long lost. Among the wooers had been those who were young, vigorous, good to look upon, possessed of wealth and understanding.

Odysseus had eavesdropped upon some of the handmaidens gossiping among themselves, saying that noble Penelope had looked not at all unkindly upon the wooer Amphinomus. If then Odysseus had afterward hanged the handmaidens to the rooftree so that they dangled like thrushes in a snare, swaying gently to and fro, it was because he wished to stifle the rumour; it had an ill sound in his ears. And yet he bore Penelope a grudge because she never spoke to him of the days of the wooers.

But the clouds that did sometimes overhang his spirit scattered as he considered how all his adventures, wanderings, and trials had turned out well at last. Now the evil had vanished in the bosom of the sea, and to him remained the fame, a fame no other mortal man possessed now that Achilles was dead.

Often in his heart he measured his own fame against that of Achilles. He had been honoured like one of the gods because he was the first warrior hero among the Achaeans. But higher than the prize of the warrior hero the far-travelled Odysseus held the fame of a wise, prudent, and crafty man; and of this there was no doubt, that none since Prometheus and Daedalus had been so glorious for guile, understanding, and resource as he, Odysseus.

Among all the Achaeans they sang of his deeds: all the things he had done before Troy, how he had contrived the bold crafty plan of the wooden horse, and how he had roamed the sea to its uttermost isle, and how among the men in the ships of Ithaca he alone had survived, saving his dear life, and how he had killed the wooers and reconquered the isle.

The tales were not always the same. The truth was not always believed, and what was believed was not always

true. Yet slowly the many tales mingled as one tale, and the many truths became one truth.

At length this one tale was believed by all—by those who told and sang it, by those who heard it, even by those who had taken part in the events of the tale. Far-famed Odysseus himself believed the tale, and often he could not have told, even after pondering long and deeply, what was true and what only a song.

There was the host of wooers that he and his son and the two herdsmen had slain. There had been four of them, he and his men, this was certain: but how many had the wooers been? Often he searched his memory for names. Thirty-nine he found, and it would have been hero's deed enough if they four had slain the thirty-nine. But in the verses upon the killing of the suitors he had at first sent three hundred below to Hades. This he had not let pass; he had corrected and reduced the number. Now in their verses they sang of a hundred and eighteen. A hundred and eighteen wooers far-famed Odysseus had slain. At this they left it. They added none and took none away.

Even in the sight of those who had shared in the great avenging, of the wise youth Telemachus, the goodly swineherd Eumaeus, and the bold neatherd Philoetius, there were now a hundred and eighteen of the slain wooers. And a hundred and eighteen they were to noble Penelope. Once, indeed, long ago, she had asked with gentle surprise, "Were they a hundred and eighteen?" Now she asked no longer. And the far-travelled Odysseus of many counsels himself found ever greater difficulty in reckoning out whether the wooers had numbered XXXIX or CXVIII.

The men who raised up a world more real and more to be believed than the world of your own experience were the story-tellers, the singers. For the most part they were old and feeble, good for nothing but to tell stories. They possessed neither treasures nor power, yet they were not without esteem. Every king with any pride had his singer, and gave him meat to eat and scented wine to drink. And this was the reason, for two things above all rejoiced a man's

heart, his treasures and his fame. And fame was better than treasures. Treasures a man must leave behind when he departed, but his fame he could still enjoy in the nether world. When a new soul appeared, the formerly departed would throng about it, and one of them would ask, "Tell me, soul, what is my fame among mortal men?" And if the new soul replied, "Departed one, you live on in song," the departed rejoiced. And without singers there was no fame.

Odysseus' singer was named Phemius. Like all singers he also called himself Homer. Homer signified the fellow-traveller, he who cannot walk alone. But singers were called Homers for two reasons. First, because mostly they were feeble of sight, or downright blind. This availed them in their calling, for the inward vision grew sharper as the outward view dimmed. Further, they were called fellow-travellers because they could have told no stories unless others had first done the deeds for them to tell of.

The Homer of illustrious Odysseus, then, was named Phemius. He had sung also for the wooers, and had accepted meat and bread at their hands. Yet Odysseus bore him no grudge, and quite forgot it; for they were not many on whom the gods had bestowed the gift of song and story.

And indeed what could the old man have done else in the years of the wooers? Odysseus knew too well: in all the world there was nothing more craven or more doglike than the base hunger of the belly. The tyrant belly was a masterful lord that would be filled, that drove even the most refractory to forget their wrath.

Odysseus, then, exacted nothing of his Homer for having served the wooers, and instead commanded him ever anew to recount the slaying of the wooers.

Gladly Phemius obeyed; half speaking, half singing he told of the slain one hundred and eighteen. The other deeds of Odysseus also Phemius was bidden to sing for his master. The verses billowed onward like waves of the sea, abounding in fish, and Odysseus hearkened.

Often then would he sit, his ears and his heart yet filled with the divine song, alone by the wine-dark sea. It was

sweet to look out from the safe land across the salt sea, in serenity remembering its perils. But often a fierce yearning for what was past overcame him.

Well he knew how a man feels in extremity. Your heart sinks down into your bowels, you importune the gods and curse your own folly for having entered upon these hazards in your overweening curiosity; and having escaped, you vow to be wise henceforth and to shun this foolishness. But you can do no other: soon you yearn again to be back in the treacherous whirlpool.

Sixty years Odysseus counted now, and his desires grew weaker. But sometimes he was like a youth of twenty, and his brow would darken as he thought how once he had voyaged, fiercely and dangerously, across the purple sea, and how he spent his allotted time sitting in sloth. Many paths led over the broad earth, the sea billowed round about, full of fish and ships and monsters, and in every far quarter were men he knew not of and things he had never seen.

The last strangers he had seen were the Phaeacians. They dwelt in their far isle of Scheria at the end of the world; strangely wise and happy were they, and often the curious Odysseus pondered their nature and their customs. For they were not as all other men.

The godlike Achaens, they of the mainland and they of the isles, if they were not content with what they had, would fare forth to attack far men in the east whose treasures they had heard of, to despoil them at the sharp edge of the sword. But the Phaeacians did not greatly esteem war, nor the glory of the destroyers of cities. Instead they wrought things of price by artful toil; they built houses greater and richer than those of other men, and more noble household utensils; over the seas they sent their stoutly built fifty-two-oared ships, and exchanged what they had produced for the treasures of nations as far away as themselves, at other points on the rim of the circular earth, and brought home ore and spices and strange merchandise.

With a brightness that hurt the eye of old Odysseus the land of Scheria rose before him, the laughing isle of the

Phaeacians. It had vanished from his view. The godlike Achaeans with their frail ships dared not voyage thither, to the very bounds of the boundless ocean; The Phaeacians, although their sure vessels would have carried them to the Achaeans, were not seen or heard of.

Sometimes illustrious Odysseus regretted that once the gods had cast him away upon that rich and smiling isle he had not tarried to learn the mind and ways of the Phaeacians. Reserved as they were to all strangers, him they would surely have harboured longer. The fair, white-armed Princess Nausicaä had looked kindly upon him, and likewise her father, the exalted King Alcinoüs, had been well disposed. But duty had called him back to noble Penelope, and so he had bidden the Phaeacians carry him home to his isle of Ithaca in a magically swift, safe ship.

Restless Odysseus could no longer master himself. He resolved to voyage a second time to the Phaeacians, not shunning the perils of ocean and the toils of the salt sea.

He spoke naught of his resolve to his wife, noble Penelope, for fear she weep and beseech him not to venture a second time upon the inhospitable sea. But he did tell his purpose to his son, wise Telemachus. He forthwith replied that he wished to come also. This, however, was not the plan of crafty Odysseus, and first gently, then sternly he forbade it. With guileful words of flattery he showed his son how he would rule the isle in Odysseus' stead while his sire was afar. He would be first in Ithaca, tasting the joy of command. So he consoled him, and the youth's heart leaped up. And his father warned him to be stern, saying that if any man opposed him he must smite the refractory one a great blow on the mouth with his sceptre.

Then noble Odysseus chose twenty-two stately companions, and fitted out a round-bellied, blue-beaked ship. They drew it down to the briny flood, carried the mast aboard and the sails, and hung the oars in their leather rowlocks, all as was proper. And they laded the ship with all the provisions it would carry, and gifts for the Phaeacians

—plain ones, indeed, for they could not measure themselves against those the Phaeacians had sent when they brought him home.

And then they set sails and plied the oars.

II

And so, a man of sixty summers, patient, godlike Odysseus, thirsty for knowledge, sailed the sea again. Joyfully he looked upon the white-foaming waves and drank the briny air. He wondered whether his old foe, the god Poseidon, were reconciled, and almost he yearned to try anew the wrath of the trident-shaker. But the sea bore him kindly, the divine ones sent a favouring wind, the men at whose harbours he put in were obliging, and replenished his stores; and after an endless voyage he landed, faintly disappointed that no adventures had befallen him, in the well sheltered harbour of the isle of Scheria.

The Phaeacians had no love of strangers. They had had good reason to seek out their isle at the end of the inhabited world; they wanted to be alone. But they were god-fearing and well-conducted, and now that the stranger was indeed here, they helped him and his companions to draw the black ship ashore.

Odysseus bade his men follow him with the gifts. For himself he set out at once to see exalted Alcinoüs, the king, the generous host. He passed among the sheds where lay the ships of the Phaeacians, tall, seaworthy, strong-winged like birds and swift as thought. No other nation had the craft to build such vessels. His spirits almost fell as he reflected how wretched must seem his own ship among all these, and yet it was the best that Ithaca could bring forth. He wondered that he had survived the long voyage unharmed in his poor vessel, and he dreaded the homeward journey.

He saw the workshops where the ships were fashioned, and he inquired, praising it highly, after the magic ship that had borne him back to his isle seven years ago. But the

Phaeacians, though courteous, were reserved in their replies, and, he thought, unwilling.

He came to the house of Alcinoüs. Perhaps the walls of the castle had been yet mightier in his memory, and its gardens yet more splendid; but on the other hand in those seven years his eye had grown keener for the fair order and proportions of the house. With admiring eyes he beheld the golden dogs that guarded the main gate, and the bronze wreaths of the cornice within and the silver youths standing upon their graciously fashioned pediments, holding torches to light those who banqueted in the hall.

The benevolent king Alcinoüs greeted him kindly. But his heart too seemed disagreeably touched at the second coming of the guest. He told Odysseus that Poseidon of the trident had been wroth because they had given him (to whom after all the god was ill disposed) a friendly reception and generously conducted him safe to his isle. The god had cruelly sunk the good ship within sight of home on its return voyage.

Thereupon he, Alcinoüs, and his viceroys and nobles in solemn conclave had resolved henceforth to shun strangers. For this, after all, they lived at the end of the inhabited world, divided by much water from other mortals, that they might be safe from the onslaughts of warlike nations, who, possessing little property and lured by the treasures of the isle, might descend upon the kindly Phaeacians. Thus the Cretans had perished, because they had possessed treasures and had shown incautious magnanimity to strangers. No one, he said, supposed that their noble guest had come to spy out the land with evil intent, though the fame of his guile had reached their havens. But a resolution of the conclave was a law unto him, the king.

With dismay illustrious Odysseus heard these words. But he made shrewd reply, "Oft in my isle of Ithaca as I enjoyed my good fortune, sitting by the sea or in my fair house with my wife and my wise son, I said to myself: All this you owe to the exalted king Alcinoüs and his swift rowers. Only to tell you this, mighty ruler and host, to

offer you the thanks I bear deep in my bosom, have I come to you, braving the toilsome voyage. Not now do I clasp your knees beseeching and imploring; I will strive to come home with my own oars. Fifty-two rowers, indeed, my vessel cannot boast; only the Phaeacians ,skilled in the arts, can build such ships."

The companions of Odysseus, meanwhile, had arrived, and they spread the gifts before the king. These made a sorry show in the sumptuous house. Yet the courteous ruler uttered no word of blame, but spoke kindly of the gifts that his dear guest had carried far across the sea.

King Alcinoüs, however, was aware of his own merits, and despite his wisdom loved to use his tongue. What he did now was perhaps unwise, and assuredly it did not accord with the resolution that he and his viceroys had taken. But the gifts, the well-intended offerings of the guest, were so poor that they aroused in him a desire to show the stranger his own treasures.

Into the nether vaults he took him, loosing the leather strap of the mighty bronze door and thrusting the artfully wrought key into its ring. With a monstrous roar like the bellow of a bull that espies a cow, the heavy doors gaped asunder. Yellow gold gleamed there, and red copper and white tin. Costly embroidered stuffs billowed forth, garments, carpets; savoury spices in sacks gave forth their scent, and balsamed old wine in tuns. There stood works of art, statues, tripods, vases, double goblets splendidly wrought, which the god Hephaestus himself might have made.

And Alcinoüs, full of covert pride, explained these glories to his guest. This many-coloured, gleaming, embroidered carpet had come to him from the eastern border of the earth; yonder mighty mixing vessels, adorned with wondrous beaten figures, from the south. Those honey-yellow stones he had brought from the far, gloomy, misty distance, this table with the lion feet and this bronze goddess came from a land far beyond fallen Troy. And the gleaming light was magical, and the scent was bewitching.

And Odysseus went among the treasures, his mind numbed as if with wine. He said, "Verily, O King, I have roamed all the inhabited earth, and have gone even beyond its borders. I have been in holy places, on mountain tops where the gods dwell and where men and things lose their shadow. But such things as you show me now, my lord, I have never seen." And this was the truth.

Then the king led his guest into an innermost chamber, and here he showed him something altogether new. This new thing lay in rough heaps, and it also stood, forged into arms, chests, articles for every purpose. It was no splendid substance; blackish and bluish were its colours.

"Copper?" noble Odysseus asked doubtfully. "A copper mixture of a special sort?"

Smiling and proud, however, exalted King Alcinoüs shook his head; softly, almost reverently, with high solemnity he spoke: "No, noble guest, that is not copper, nor is it bronze. It is iron."

"May I touch this iron of yours?" asked the noble Odysseus rather shyly, the strange word rolling heavy across his tongue.

"You may indeed," replied the king, "and pick it up as well."

And so Odysseus picked it up and weighed it and felt of it, and this new thing proved to be hard and heavy.

Alcinoüs, meanwhile, praised the qualities of the unknown substance, saying it was wondrously hard and fit to resist, quite otherwise than red bronze. "See for yourself," he invited his guest, and proffered him a pointed lance, wrought of the new substance. "Cast it against the bronze plate of yonder wall," he said.

This Odysseus did. But the lance remained sharp as before. Then he understood that arms and objects made of the new substance must be better than any others. Again and again he felt this new thing, bluish-black, with uncertain hands, and scanned it with unbelieving eyes. "Iron," he said, practising the strange word. "Iron."

And Alcinoüs told him more of iron. It came from the

uttermost east, and none could seek it save only the Phacacians with their magic ships, swift and fifty-two-oared. As yet, dismayed by the fate of the great isle of Crete, Alcinoüs had caused only arms to be forged; for the splendid island empire, in sheer desire to swell its learning and to make fair things, had given too little thought to its battle army. "Not so I," said Alcinoüs, "I shall make the iron into arms. Sooner would I turn it to a more useful purpose, to utensils for house and farm. But men are greedy, and a wise nation does well to be prepared. I fear we shall cleave many a man's skull with the blue iron before we can turn it to better use." Thus spoke the wise, peaceable King Alcinoüs.

Illustrious Odysseus had grown up in reverence for copper and reddish gleaming bronze, so wondrously useful for the concerns of war and peace. Now seeing that there was something better, this bluish-black substance, this iron, he was confused; nay, he was unhappy. He had supposed his heart well inclined toward new things, his understanding open to new things. But now he gazed upon the iron uneasily; his spirit turned from it; almost he hated it.

And if even he feared the new thing and what it must bring after it, how hard then would it be for his viceroys to grow accustomed to it, how hard for the whole silly mass of the godlike Achaeans! Yes, no doubt the illustrious King Alcinoüs was right. Not only strangers but the Achaeans themselves would slay one another in their thousands and their ten thousands before they gave up copper, before they gave up the old way of making and using arms and utensils, and turned to the new, to the use of iron.

He would not show the king how deeply his spirit was stirred, and he said with courteous curiosity, "Hard it must be to forge this bluish-black stuff as one would have it, into stout weapons or good utensils."

"It is no easy task," the noble ruler Alcinoüs made reply. "But King Pheadimus of Sidon will send me men well skilled in the art of forging the tough iron, that they may instruct my Phaeacians. For we Phaeacians are beloved by the gods, blessed with clear heads, quick to learn."

"But," Odysseus asked, "will the resplendent ruler of Sidon indeed truly send you the skilled masters?"

"He has promised me," replied Alcinoüs, "I have his word."

"What are fleeting words?" Odysseus asked again. "Cannot a man of ready counsel so use his flying words that they are light and pliant, and he can escape their toils?" This he said prudently. And he thought of his father's father, Autolycus, from whom guile had descended to him, and who had been renowned for his mastery in shaping oaths so that they were of none account.

But the other king, mighty Alcinoüs, laughed and said, "Wise in experience you are, illustrious Odysseus, master of ruses and stratagems. But I too am skilled in guile. I have more than words. See here." And he opened yet another door. There blocks were piled up, and tablets and plates, clay for the most part, but some of stone, and on these tablets, plates and blocks were scratched signs—lines, dots, curves, and also little pictures, many and confused, all different, and all differently arranged. Alcinoüs, the exalted ruler, pointed to the tablets, and spoke slyly: "You see, I have it in writing."

Noble Odysseus, who had seen many lands and looked deep into many men, gazed upon the tablets and blocks, and understood naught. "Writing?" he asked stupidly.

"You see it, noble Odysseus," his host explained. "On these tablets the King of Sidon swears to send me the smiths skilled in their craft, and called down the wrath of the gods upon his own head if he should not do it."

Even more than the iron did this strike dismay to the heart of patient Odysseus. He had indeed heard tales of such signs and figures, and of how distant eastern and southern nations made use of them; he had supposed it was a spell, like any other spell, sometimes availing, sometimes not. But now that Alcinoüs set forth their meaning to him, he saw that these scratches were more. They were tools to hold fast words, winged and fleeting; they made the invisible visible, the momentary everlasting, they made men like gods.

He was more dismayed as he saw what change the use of these scratched signs must bring to the life and opinions of mortals. And at the same instant he reflected that his people, the godlike Achaeans, not so swift of understanding as the Phaeacians, would surely find great trouble in remembering all the signs for all the words. And how was it with himself and his sixty summers? Would he not be too old to possess himself of this frightful and useful new thing, the art of writing? So much to-do he foresaw, such striving and confusion, before the blessing became a blessing, that he grew dizzy as if white-foaming waves were tossing him after shipwreck in a storm. Barely could he dissemble before his host, as custom demanded, and maintain a pretended calm.

III

Then came Princess Nausicaa. He remembered their first encounter. She had been playing ball with her companions, and he had burst forth from the bushes, naked, dirty, bleeding with fierce scratches and scrapes, covered with mud and dry leaves, and all had fled from the sight of him. But she had stood fast, fair, white-armed Nausicaä, and had looked kindly upon him.

This then he remembered as she came. But no longer was she like unto the image he had carried in his heart. She wore a veil now, a cap and diadem; she was married. He had not stayed, and so he could have expected naught else; he must have foreseen that she would accept the suit of some young nobleman of her isle. But he was wroth to see that her husband was that same insolent youth Euryalus who had boldly mocked him then, saying that he was like rather unto a wandering merchant than any hero. Princess Nausicaä might have honoured his, Odysseus', memory more, and not chosen this very man to share her couch.

He spoke the words of friendship to the two; yet vexation and uncertainty dwelt still in his heart. I am

Odysseus, he thought, son of Laertes, of all men the craftiest; my fame reaches to heaven. Yet I know not, nor can I learn with all my wisdom, whether it were not better to have stayed here in the laughing isle rather than to have gone to my isle of Ithaca, where men still live and walk and do battle after the manner of their forefathers. If I had stayed, then to this day the haughty wooers would still be walking the earth in Ithaca; one of them, probably Amphinomus, would be in the bed of the noble Penelope, and Telemachus would be put in the shade. But I, Odysseus, would be son-in-law to the exalted Alcinoüs, his successor and heir to his treasures, and I would have sons by white-armed Nausicaä.

Yet perhaps after all I did better then to go home. For in this isle I must have proved myself every day anew to the godlike Phaeacians, and who knows whether I had been equal to all those new, strange, and difficult things with which they are blessed? My heart is as water at sight of their many-oared ships, their bluish-black iron, and the tangled signs they scratch on stones. Thus thought illustrious Odysseus, and doubts flew like hasting clouds over his soul, and vanished, and came anew.

But then came the feast. It was a lavish banquet that Alcinoüs spread in his honour. Eight white-toothed swine the king had caused to be butchered for the banquet, twelve wethers, and two of the shambling kine. There sat they all, Alcinoüs himself and his viceroys and nobles, on the chairs of fair form covered with skins, and lifted up their hands to the feast. And Odysseus had the place of honour beside the exalted Alcinoüs. Tirelessly the menservants carried pieces of meat dripping with fat, and poured out wine, and they spiced the wine with nepenthe, the juice of the root that spread serenity in men's hearts.

Then the singer was led in, the Homer of King Alcinoüs, and this Homer, Demodocus by name, was altogether blind. He was received with universal respect. The high seat adorned with copper was set for him in the middle of the hall against a lofty pillar; on this pillar they hung his harp,

and guided the singer's hand that he might find it. Before him they put a fair-planed tablet, and upon it a silver bread-basket and a golden goblet of wine, that he might drink to his heart's content.

And Odysseus well remembered how gloriously this Homer had sung at his first tarrying in the isle. He had sung of Troy, as afterward his own singer, Phemius, had done. But, beyond all peradventure, Demodocus had sung far more nobly. He was the best of all the Homers of all the kings; surely his words would sweep away the words of others, and if Odysseus' fame were to reach the heavens for time everlasting, it could be only through the clanging harp and the sweetly billowing words of this Homer.

And illustrious Odysseus summoned the cup-bearer, and divided the meat before him, a splendid saddle of mutton, fat and deliciously smelling, his portion of honour, and bade the cup-bearer take the meat to Demodocus that he might eat of it; for it was fitting that mortal men should honour the Homers, and the song of Demodocus had dwelt in his heart through all the years. And the cup-bearer carried the meat to the singer; and he rejoiced in the meat and the praise.

And exalted Alcinoüs spoke unto Odysseus: "Much we have heard, O wily Odysseus, of the strength and guile with which you restored your dominion after you came home to your island, vanquishing the three hundred wooers, presumptuous as they were. Yet the tales told are different, as is the way among men. Therefore, illustrious Odysseus, let you tell us how it was indeed; for, after all, it is you who must know."

"It is no easy thing for me to tell," noble, patient Odysseus made reply. "Ever and again my heart is crushed in my breast when I remember those evil hours. Yet since you desire, O mighty King, to hear of that deed, I will tell you; thus it befits a guest. Yet first of all must I tell you that not three hundred were the wooers whom I slew."

But scarcely had he spoken when the singer, divine Demodocus, addressed him. "Fain would I hear from your

own lips," said he in his aged yet still sonorous voice, "the true number that there were. Many men have I asked. The numbers they told were not alike. Yet most affirmed that not three hundred were the slain wooers, but a hundred and eighteen."

And guileful Odysseus replied forthwith: "It is you that say it, dear Homer. A hundred and eighteen there were."

And Demodocus rejoiced, saying: "A hundred and eighteen. Thus it was, thus it must have been; it deserves belief. One hundred and eighteen. It has a good sound, and well beseems the lay."

Odysseus, heartened by this beginning, told concerning the slaying of the wooers many things that had grown up in his memory and joined themselves one to another. And Demodocus heard him, thinking gladly, great deeds and well suited to my song.

When Odysseus had finished, he asked that after his simple story the sweet singer might tell of Troy. And he praised Demodocus, saying: "What you told of Troy when first I tarried here has never left my heart. You told to admiration of the Achaeans, what they did and suffered in toilsome war, as if yourself had been there."

Demodocus did not tarry long to be asked. He sang of the wrath of Achilles of the Pleiades, of the fight between Hector and Ajax, and likewise of the death of Patroclus and the deeds Odysseus had done before the walls of Troy. Merriest and most woeful was the blind singer's tale of the wooden horse that wise Odysseus had contrived, that the Trojans themselves might draw it into their city. And they, fools blinded by a god, did so. But the heroes whom Odysseus had gathered about him in the belly of the horse were fools no less. When Helen, accompanied by Trojan heroes, looked upon the horse, a mad whim came upon the fair one, and she called to the horse in the feigned voices of Achaean women, even the voices of the wives of Achaeans who were gathered in the belly of the horse. And they, first one, then another, then a third, hearing the voices of their dear and long-wanted bedfellows, made as if to reply; and

they would have betrayed all but that Odysseus, swift of resolution, had fiercely clapped an angry hand over their mouths.

Odysseus, taken aback, hearkened to the singer. Not for a long time had he himself thought of the adventure in the belly of the wooden horse, and to none had he told it. How then could the blind man know the tale so well? What god had whispered it to him? It had not, indeed, befallen exactly as the singer told it, but this much was true: his companions, the Achaean princes, had behaved without understanding. Close together they had crouched and lain in the belly of the horse; long grew the hours. Mad, evil moods came over the men, and only by force, truly pressing his hand to their lips, had he, Odysseus, prevented their giving themselves away by noise and talk.

And Odysseus pondered the stupidity of men. They had always acted as fools, and they acted as fools still. He pondered also his own slowness of wits in understanding the bluish-black stuff, iron, and the signs that were scratched upon stones. And sadness and rage filled his heart because the gods made it so hard for mortal men to speed their thoughts and to see things with a clear eye.

He showed not his wrath, but asked Alcinoüs: "Tell me, splendid ruler, what do you with the songs of your Homer? Do you cause them to be scratched upon your stones?"

And the exalted Alcinoüs laughed heartily, saying, "For this a whole quarry would be needed if all the verses were to be scratched that my Homer sings. No, dear stranger, not for such things do I use the stones and the rare iron, but for serious concerns."

And he laughed, and the others laughed with him, even Homer laughed also; and the broad hall rang with great laughter.

And now the ancient viceroy Acheneus asked that Homer sing the voyages of most illustrious Odysseus on the seas teeming with fish, and the great perils and great escapes that the wrathful and the favouring gods had bestowed on that noble and patient man. Thereupon Odysseus listened

joyfully; for if now the poet told of what he himself had recounted on his first tarrying in the isle, he would know what he should think of his own deeds, and what part of them would remain, imperishable and young for all time.

Demodocus sang. With aching heart, as if living through all again, Odysseus heard of his wanderings. How he had come to the isle of the winds, Aeolus, and how he had gone into the awful cave of the Cyclops, and how he had descended into Hades. And he heard of the sirens and of Scylla and Charybdis, and how his doltish companions had devoured the kine of Helios. And he heard of his guile, and yet more of his guile, and again and again of his guile and of renowned craft.

Splendidly Demodocus sang, and they all heard him gladly; they would fain have listened the night through. Odysseus too heard him gladly. He closed his eyes, making himself blind as the blind Homer, that he might take in the song. He wrought his deeds and suffered his trials anew as he heard them. Already they were altered; already there were more of his companions whom he lost, already the waves beat higher that angry Poseidon hurled upon his ship. And the sirens sang more sweetly, the Cyclops grew in stature and horror, and the nymph Calypso tempted him more seductively. As Demodocus sang it now, so it was and would be for all time. Yet still noble Odysseus was the Odysseus of to-day and of time past. The memory was so strong upon him that tears came into his closed eyes. Yet he would not let the others see; for good cheer is fitting at a banquet. He seized the purple cloak and drew it over his head to hide the rushing tears. The he drank of the wine spiced with nepenthe, that cheer and delight might return to his heart.

IV

Sleep came unto Odysseus in the night after the banquet. Always new things had stirred his soul, and his mind had sought to explore what was known. He yearned to tarry

here with the Phaeacians until he learned to forge the bluish iron and wield it and to distinguish the signs that they scratched in clay and tablets. But patient goodly Odysseus was sixty years old, and he feared the laughter of the boys when he, the old man, learned like an untaught child and mistook him. In Ithaca, in his dear home, no man showed him things he knew not; there he knew each reply, and was the wisest beyond dispute.

The next day the mighty ruler Alcinoüs spoke unto him: "Tell me, what will be your doing? Will you tarry here or go back to your wooded isle? Openly I tell you, you are welcome unto us if you tarry; to other mortals you can betray naught of our serene isle and our treasures. But even if you go, dear guest, we are willing; for the guest must not be hindered. Now, indeed, we cannot offer you one of our ships; that would go against our resolutions. But perhaps the gods will vouchsafe a pleasant homeward voyage even to your ship of twenty-two oars."

For a second the far-travelled Odysseus hesitated. Then he made reply: "Only to see your face did I come, godlike Alcinoüs, and that of Princess Nausicaa, you who saved my life. Now that I know you are well, gladly would I return to my renowned isle."

"As you desire, noble Odysseus, so shall your doing be," replied mighty Alcinoüs. "And we shall send you gifts to your black ship, and make sacrifice to the gods, that they may give you good winds."

Yet before Odysseus and his companions put forth upon the sea again, he sought out Demodocus the singer. With him he sat in the open porch in the pleasant cool of the evening, and they drank wine, and spoke one to the other. And far-seeing Odysseus said, "Sweet is the lot of him who lives on in the song of the Homers, and no better fate could the gods bestow on me than to let my deeds be spoken and sung by you, Demodocus, who are rightfully praised above all other Homers. What you have told of my voyages and deeds and of myself belongs to me, and also belongs to me no longer. As you sang, my deeds took leave of me, and

now they confront me, and they are mine, and are not mine, and are near unto me and alien to me like hair cut off."[1]

Renowned Demodocus drank of the scented wine and said prudently, "Each one of us should give thanks unto the other, illustrious Odysseus. I unto you, for your deeds are the mainstay of my songs, as the bones held the body. And you unto me; for without the song of the poets the deeds of the heroes are blown away in senseless disarray."

"So it is," said noble patient Odysseus.

And further he spoke: "Many of my adventures you have told, godlike Demodocus, and each one of them lives. Yet one alone is lame and hollow and like the shades in Hades." He saw that the blind man's countenance darkened, and hastened to say further: "It must be that I did not remember it aright when I told it years agone."

And Demodocus asked, "Which one of the adventures is it?"

"It is the story," replied Odysseus, "of when I dwelt in the house of the enchantress Circe in the isle of Aea."

"You mean the story," Demodocus made inquiry, "when the goddess transformed your company into swine? And to you swift-footed Hermes gave a wonder-working herb so that you changed your dear companions again into men?" And as Odysseus said naught, the singer went on, somewhat vexed, "So you told it then. Twenty-two companions, you said, and the herb moly, you said, and so have I sung it for years."

Odysseus of many counsels, however, turned and made confession: "I told it, and it was so, but it was only partly so."

"Then tell it anew, and tell it all," Demodocus demanded.

And Odysseus obeyed, saying, "When I had tamed Circe and shared her fair-made couch, I set forth to transform my companions again. In my hand I bore the charmed herb

[1] Here the Homer who tells us of Odysseus' second voyage to Scheria permits himself a liberty. The godlike Achaeans never cut their hair except it were to send them with one of the beloved dead. Sure it is that Odysseus, son of Laertes, never cut his hair.

that Hermes, messenger of the gods, had given me, the magic plant moly; its root is black, milk-white the flower, and divine is its working. When I came unto the sty, I found my companions all gathered together, twenty-two in number, and I looked upon them and pondered: which of these is Polites, dearest of them all? And which of these white-toothed swine is my friend and cousin Noemon? Which is Phronius? And which Antiphus? And my heart swelled with joy as I thought how forthwith they would stand before me in their old, familiar shapes. And I called them, beckoning with the powerful root, and said, 'Come friends, dear companions, come here that I may touch your bristled hides with the healing herb. When I touch you, you shall return to the shape of man, the long, upright limbs, the smooth skin, the dear speech of men.'

"But they, when they heard me, ran into corners and away from me, fearing me and my root. I believed the goddess, Circe the enchantress, the witch, had confounded their hearts and understanding. And I called unto my companions anew, and spoke unto them: 'Hear me, friends, understand my words. The great god Hermes has given me this herb moly to take away the evil spell. Let me touch your bristles; become men again. Take back the old familiar shapes.' But they, more timid than before, strove from me, grunting with fear, squeaked as if evil awaited them, and as the gates of the sty stood wide, they fled out past me, carrying their fat bellies away on short, hurrying legs. And I did not understand, and my heart was confused.

"At last, creeping near, I made shift to touch one of the swine with my root. Forthwith the bristly hide fell away; before me stood my companion Elpenor, the youngest of us, an ordinary lad, not great in battle, nor gifted with understanding. Upright he stood before me in human shape. But not as I had expected did he embrace me with his arms; he did not rejoice, he was not happy. Rather he cursed me, saying, 'Have you come again, restless man, to torment us, bring our bodies into peril, wring fresh resolutions from our hearts? Sweet it was to be as I was:

to roll in sun and mud, to enjoy eating and drinking, and to grunt and to be free of the doubt—should I do this or should I do that? Why have you come and dragged me back into the hateful life of former times?' So he reproached me and cursed and wept. Then he went and made himself drunk, and lay down on the roof of Circe's house to sleep. But my other companions, the swine, came back and roused him with their grunting and squeaking. Still dizzy with wine and sleep, yearning darkly, he rolled toward his companions. But he missed the step; he fell from the roof, and rendered up his life. And he was the only one I had been able to change again.

"Much I had suffered, but never aught so dire as in that hour. The heart grew heavy in my breast, it sank down into my bowels. My friends were fleeing from me, striving to keep their swinish shape, not to go back to the learning of men. Only the dullest I had caught and made again into a man, but what a man, and not for long."

And the face of Odysseus as he told this grew older, sharper, more worn. Not alone the memory of that moment weighed upon him, but also the thought that now he himself was striving not to enter into the brighter, sharper world like to that which the Phaeacians had showed him.

And he finished: "This, Demodocus, is the truth, and not what I told before. Not twenty-two companions did I change again, but only one, and that one man's soul went forthwith to Hades. Tell me now, renowned singer, shall you tell what I suffered with Circe in the future as you have hitherto? Or shall you see it as I tell you now?"

Demodocus, the Homer, drank of the wine, spoke no word for a long time, and considered. Then he made reply: "Noble Odysseus, patient and far-travelled, I think that I shall tell the story still as I have hitherto. What you told me to-day does not beseem poetry. For the mortal men who live now it will not make a song." Gently and courteous he ended, "Mayhap it will make a song in later times."

Thus blind Demodocus wiped the true story of Odysseus and the swine from his heart.

And Odysseus went home to noble Penelope and his wise son Telemachus. Years passed away; strangers came to the isle of Ithaca, bringing news and songs. More and more songs were sung about the voyages of Odysseus, and Demodocus' song of the adventure in the isle of Aea with Circe the enchantress and of the transforming of the swine was one of those most often sung. And since illustrious Odysseus never heard the story except as Demodocus told it, he too at last forgot how it had taken place in truth.

For other twenty years goodly Odysseus lived in his isle of Ithaca. He lived in peace and serenity, scarcely plagued by yearning now as he looked out upon the wine-dark sea. Sometimes he would descend into his vaults and regard his treasures, and also the gifts that the Phaeacians had sent with him. They had sent a piece of their bluish-black substance. In the lower cellar of Odysseus the piece of iron lay; slowly it lost its gleam, and brown rust overspread it. This Odysseus saw at first with surprise, then with the eye of indifference. Soon he hardly saw it, and slowly he forgot its name.

But his son and successor Telemachus did indeed learn the name of iron. And later all the Achaeans learned it. At last they learned also to use it, bluish, black, new; but not without bloodshed.

TRANSLATORS OF THE FOREGOING STORIES

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